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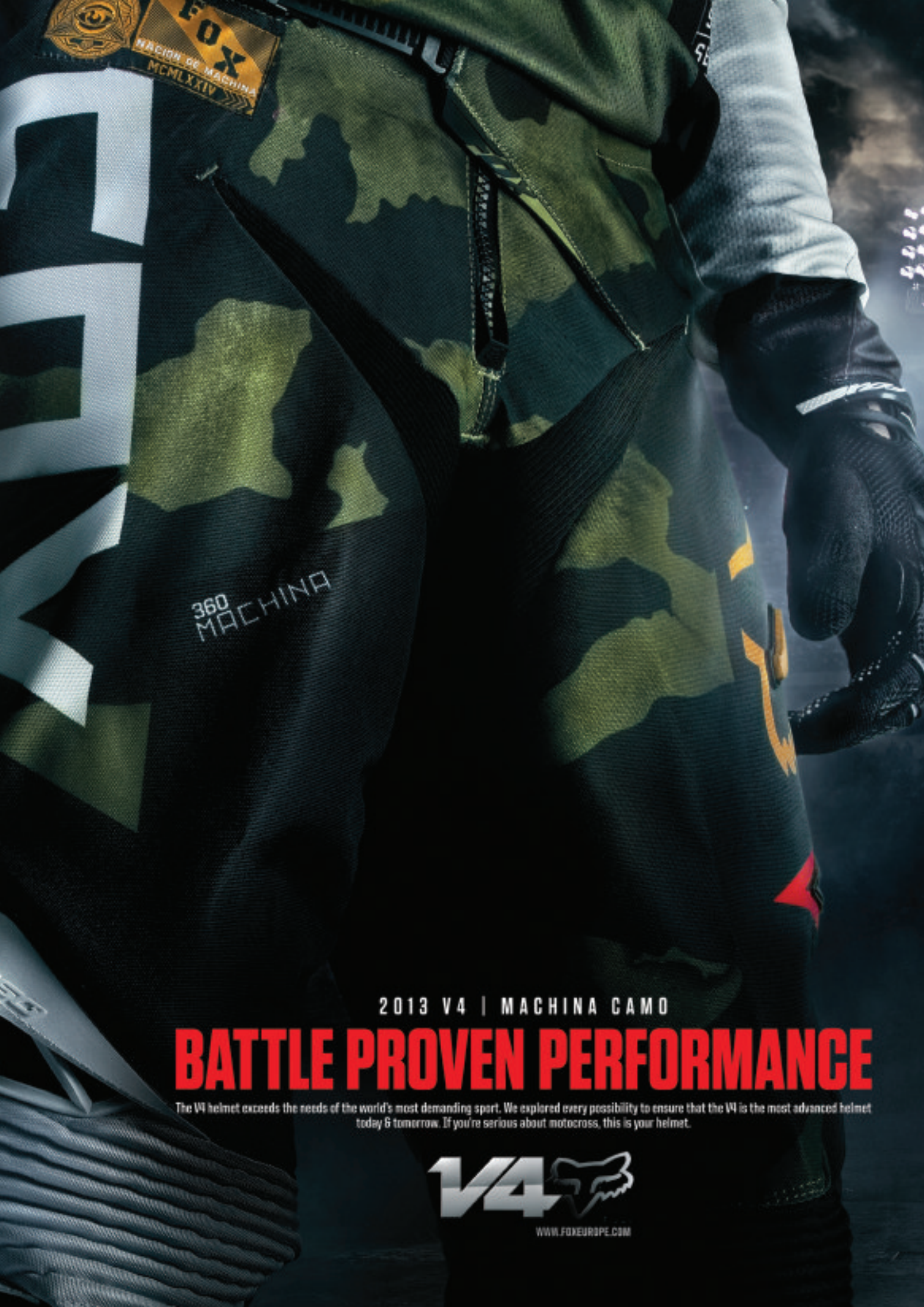
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© Jake Klingensmith

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© Sully





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2013





# COMMENT

*'Twas the night before deadline  
And all through the house  
Not a creature was stirring  
Not even a mouse  
I wish that were true  
But it's a great chuffing lie  
Oh please tell me why  
I ate discounted pie  
Tossing and turning  
And churning inside  
For the sake of a bargain  
I could have possibly died  
But do it again I most definitely would  
Because pork inside pastry  
Mmmmm, tastes so good...*

**S**o I'm writing this feeling slightly second hand and it's honestly got nothing to do with the New Year celebrations – I swear! Nah, these cold sweats and feelings of discomfort are from bagging myself a 44 pence pie from the bargain bin of my local supermarket and then eating it – and then it poisoning me. The thing is it tasted so good that I'd probably take the risk again – in fact I might go and see if they've got any left.

You're probably thinking I'm an idiot right now but by my reckoning life's for living and it's better to regret the things you've done than regret not having tried them at all – like cut price pies for instance. To be fair that's not a great example though and the regrets that haunt my life are all racing related...

I'm never shy in sharing how fucked my knee is and that's basically the result of picking up so many injuries from the age of 16 or so. It's never been right since I got run over by half the pack at a schoolboy national back in 1992, bending it backwards in Birmingham five years later did it no good either but the piece de resistance was

stepping over the handlebars in full flight above a huge tabletop and landing flat on my feet from two storeys up before the freefalling bike tried to bash my brains in from behind. The force was enough to crack my femur straight up the middle and squish out all the cartilage – I also grazed my nipple quite badly too. Bad times.

While you might think I'd regret going riding on any of those three days you'd be dead wrong because the real thing I rue is not making the most of the time I had with my creaky joint before it seized up completely. Instead of complaining about the pain I actually wish I'd done even more riding and let endorphins and adrenaline carry me through. Okay, more riding might have accelerated the degeneration of the joint but I'd also have a stack more memories in the bank. I can guarantee when you're old and grey – like me – you'll want to look back on the good times too so make every moment count!

The power of memory is a powerful thing and it's funny that Billy MacKenzie draws on it in his column this month. Since leaving Europe for a life Down Under Billy seems to have lost his way a little bit speedwise but on the flipside has discovered who he is as a person so much better than he would if he'd stayed in Europe.

He also seems pretty pumped to be back on a Yamaha and using all the products that helped him win world championship motos so maybe the power of his memories bringing him back to his happy place will bring him back up to speed n'all? Let's wait and see...

Hope you all had a great Christmas and a totally banging New Year and that 2013 creates more good memories than bad. Now just get out there and ride!

*Sutton*



*It's always nice when  
a half tidy rider like  
James Stewart imitates  
my silky sweet moves...*



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### SUBSCRIPTIONS

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One year: UK £30

Europe: £49.30

Rest of the world: £65

### PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY

**JP Off-Road**

### PRINTED IN ENGLAND BY

**PCP, Telford**

### CIRCULATION

**Comag, Tavistock Road,**

West Drayton,

Middlesex UB7 7QE

01895 433723

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More FMX madness from the Nitro Circus crew

# NEWS UND!

**A CHAOTIC K-9 COLLECTION OF ALL THAT'S HOT IN THE OFF-ROAD WORLD AND SOME STUFF THAT'S NOT...**

If you didn't check out any of the Nitro Circus Live shows in the run up to Christmas I can promise you that you missed out because they were 100 per cent radtacular to say the least! Without any of the fire-breathing dancing girls and all that stuff that the Masters of Dirt and Crusty Tours relied on to fill the gaps, the Nitro Circus show was a much more wholesome and family orientated affair that went down well with almost sold out audiences in London, Manchester and Brum.

As well as some of the most hardcore FMX action ever seen in the UK the shows also included a stack of BMX, ski, skate, surf and miscellaneous Gigantaramp action. If you missed out this time around make sure you don't miss out again because the tour's coming back in November with dates in Manchester (November 26), Birmingham (November 27) and London

(November 29). Tickets are already on sale right now online at [ticketmaster.co.uk](http://ticketmaster.co.uk). Go get 'em!

As you read this the Monster Energy AMA Supercross series will be firing into life Stateside and what a series it promises to be. Kicking off at Anaheim as is the norm these days it's expected that defending champ Ryan Villopoto, Ryan Dungey, James Stewart and veteran Chad Reed will battle it out for the title with wildcards Justin Barcia, Josh Grant and Trey Canard all featuring at the front of the pack too. You can keep ahead of the crowd by following the action online at [www.dirtbikerider.com](http://www.dirtbikerider.com) and through our Twitter and Facebook feeds n'all.

While there's no real news to report on just yet we do know which 250SX™ racers will be racing the West Coast rounds of the series. Defending champ Eli Tomac will be proudly running the #1 plate >>



All aboard the Rock Solid train – choo choo!





# MAC211

## TIME BANDIT!

BILLY GOES BACK TO THE FUTURE AS HE REJOINS THE BOYS IN BLUE...

Words by Billy MacKenzie Photo by 404shots.com

**G**'day Britain! I'm so, so sorry my columns have been terrible the last few months but the truth is I've been very handicapped during my transition. I can now proudly announce that for 2013 I will be aboard the CDR Yamaha riding for a very highly respected man Mr Craig Dack.

Most of you will be unfamiliar with the Aussie names but from my three year experience racing Australian motocross it has been obvious that the top team in the pits is the CDR Yamaha team and I'm so excited to be racing to win next year. I have a whole heap of fresh motivation and the blue #211 machine with its fresh look, Fox racing gear, Scott goggles and Alpinestars Tech 10s bring back a waterfall of good memories from my nine year stint with Dixon Yamaha!

Looking back on the last three years gives me some strange feelings and I'm prepared to take the positive things and put it down to another learning experience in life. But the feeling I have now with this fresh challenge and a professional team of people around me is one of relief and reminds me that when I arrive at the race track the only thing I wanna do is race to win – like I used to.

It feels like I've finally found my feet in Australia now, picked the good from the bad and created what I feel will be my best opportunity to achieve what I came here to do. I'm having a blast riding this Yamaha and training has never been more fun!

It's like I'm a kid again and I'm excited about riding my bike each week and I'm sure I'll be more excited about racing it every weekend now that I'm looking and feeling the part! It's so cool to be back riding with Fox and I remember when I was young I used to watch Terraforma 2 on repeat and buy every Fox racing video that came out. Getting a box of clothing and fresh gear from Fox was always like an early Christmas.

Again it brought back some childhood memories and reminded me why I love racing motocross.

So it's back to the future for me and I have to thank all the people who have supported me during my career. It's nice to take a big deep breath and look on to what I hope will be an amazing next few years racing. I wanna keep this fresh vibe going and harness this energy so I can unleash it at the first round.

I will be doing a few warm up races in the New Zealand championship for Coppins so I'm sure that sneaky Lizzard will teach me a few things and I'm excited to learn more and make the next few years of my racing career their optimum best. I have everything in place to try and be the best athlete/racer I have ever been so that's the goal right now and who knows what will come along with it in the future.

I have been riding a little bit with Dean Ferris lately – a new Dixon Yamaha apprentice! So look out for this kid to be running up there in the GPs and give him all your backing. He's a try hard and I'm sure with us both pushing each other during training he will be one to watch.

He lives in the hinterland just an hour from where I've based myself and the amount of awesome tracks keep blossoming each week with lots of really friendly and helpful people letting us use their acres of sun drenched land – talk about living the Aussie dream! So with these things at my disposal and Dean and I both making the switch to Yamaha we should give each other the best opportunity to do our best and get the results next year.

Last but not least I'd like to say a huge thank you to Steve Guttridge and Glenn McDonald at Kawasaki Motors for supporting me on my journey to Australia. Kawasaki has always been a very loyal company to me throughout my racing career and for that I am very grateful.

*BD 211*



in this and he'll be up against Ken Roczen, Jason Anderson, Ryan Sipes, Kyle Cunningham, Cole Seely, Zach Osborne, Malcolm Stewart, Tyla Rattray, Blake Baggett, Jessy Nelson and I sh\*t you not Dustin Hoffman – true story! And that's meant to be the support class? Pffff!

As well as rocking stadiums Stateside the sweet sound of four-poppers bouncing off the rev-limiter can be heard closer to home too as E22 Sports' Arenacross UK series goes off at venues around the country. The dates and track maps are just a few pages over so that's enough about that for now!

It's not all about stadium sports this month though as the first of this year's outdoor epics goes off on January 12. We're on about the Tough One of course which is happening at its spiritual home of Nantmawr Quarry near Oswestry (SY10 9HJ). The entry list for this year's event is simply stunning and stars Graham Jarvis, Wayne Braybrook, the Hemmos (Ben and Dan), Jonny Walker, Paul Bolton, Danny McCanney, James Dabill, Andreas Lettinbichler, Alfredo Gomez, Xavi Gallindo and more. It's basically going to be a simply stunning day out. It all kicks off at 9am with a two hour race for amateurs before the actual Tough One itself leaves the line at noon.



Bigwheel action in London's O2!

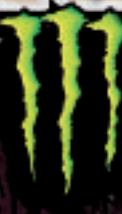


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## WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN!

### VIP TICKETS TO THE BIRMINGHAM ARENACROSS

If you like watching exciting bar to bar Arenacross race action while being pampered like a princess then you need to pull your finger out and enter this radtacular free competition to win a VIP package for two peeps at the Birmingham round of the Arenacross UK championship held inside the LG Arena on February 2.

Because we're a pukka pride of Peppa Pig perusing perfectionists we've pieced together a fully pimped prize package – with the help of our bestest buddies at E22 Sports – that one lucky reader can win for free! The package includes free exclusive

parking, the use of the VIP entrance to the arena, your own hospitality suite, some complimentary food and drinks (that means they're free and not that they'll say nice things about you and your guest) inside the suite, a meet and greet session with the stars of the evening and more free AXUK merchandise than any normal human could shake a shifty stick at.

To be in with a shout of winning this prize we want you to feast your eyes on this cunning question and then answer it correctly before the competition's closing date – January 27.

**Which current British MX2 motocross champion will be competing in the Arenacross UK championship?**

**Is it:** A: Stuart Nunn  
B: Elliott Banks-Browne  
C: Jamie Squibb  
D: Bob Hope

If you know the answer log on to [www.dirtbikerider.com](http://www.dirtbikerider.com) and follow the competitions link to **dirtZone**. The first correct answer drawn out of the pile of right 'uns – as opposed to wrong 'uns – will win the night of their lives!

 **LG Arena**

## FEBRUARY 2ND

The LG Arena • Birmingham





# GORGEIOUS!

AN APPRECIATION OF GEORGES  
JOBE BY JACK BURNICLE...

**P**erhaps the recent passing of Georges Jobe shouldn't have come as a surprise. When we'd last met – at Farleigh Castle in 2010 – he'd recoiled from a spontaneous hug because of the skin cancer already blistering his back. The cool facts of an extraordinary career tell only part of the story – five world motocross championships (twice in 250GPs, three times 500), 28 grand prix wins, seven Belgian national championships, one Italian and a double Trophee and MX des Nations triumph with Belgium. Georges' was a racing life outstanding for its longevity – 13 seasons between his first and last world titles, then retirement from top class competition as champion.

Jobe was a complex character, forthright in his views, thoughtful, technical and clever in his riding and armed with cast-iron self-belief. He had a gifted upbringing, Suzuki's golden child, practising with and learning from Belgian legends Roger de Coster and the late Gaston Rahier so his self-belief was well founded and combined with depths of willpower and determination that meant Georges never, ever gave up a cause, no matter what the odds.





He could also be charming and when in the company of friends, unleash a joyous, mischievous hilarity – who present will ever forget his riotous performance at Kini's Gala in 1987 when, as reigning world 500 champ, he cavorted in silly Austrian lederhosen, consuming unfeasible quantities of Schnapps...

Georges was also a buccaneer. He never took the easy path. Those five years in 250GPs, from 1979 through 1983, when he won two world titles and took two more to the final race were conducted as a factory-backed privateer. Fierce older brother Claude wielded the spanners, his amiable old dad the stop-watches, his mum ever-present as dignified matriarch.

There followed three seasons as a full factory Kawasaki pilot, narrowly missing out on the 500cc championship in both 1984 and 1986. Then he took the plunge on a private Honda, wife Fabienne now the driving force on watches and signal boards, his team a bunch of Belgian mates as he scooped his first 500 world title.

And with Eric Geboers going for the triple crown in 1988, Georges did the same by taking on the kids in 125 GPs. "An adventure, huh?" he shrugged when asked why! Sixth in 500GPs on a Honda managed by his close friend Andre Malherbe in 1989 he then, Yamaha having withdrawn from the open class, obstreperously campaigned a homebrewed watercooled YZ490 during 1990 in another outlandish private venture. Finally, he returned to Honda just as the factory quit 500GPs and backed by brother Claude's heavy plant company, won two more hard-fought back-to-back world titles. So Georges, a fiery independent spirit, really only ever raced as a fully-fledged works rider for Team Green.

This was typical. He relished adversity. I saw him win two French 250GPs, at Brou in 1980 and Chateau du Loire in 1983, in conditions so ghastly that many rivals simply struggled to get round. His powers of recovery were legendary – a breathtaking charge to third place from dead last in the final 250GP moto of 1982 at Vimmerby in Sweden, taking three seconds out of Geboers on the final lap at Hawkstone Park in 1986 convinced he'd won the dead heat dash to the line, his astonishing 1991 ride after crashing in the whoops, pitting and powering through the pack to snatch 10th with kitchen roll trailing dramatically from his clagged up throttle and of course that double jump, over Malherbe's head, in 1984.

He also made an unheralded one-off return to ride the Hawkstone International at the age of 40. He loved the place almost as much as he loved himself. When I asked him to fill in a questionnaire early in 1986, his answers included 'favourite food: pasta, favourite drink: sauterne (white wine – Georges's explanation for dumb Englishman!), favourite rider: ME!' I visibly started at that last bit. Georges just arched an imperious eyebrow, "why not? It is the truth!"

Jobe also loved motocross. He worried publicly about its future. He wanted it to remain always a tough physical and mental challenge. He was a skilled supercross exponent, winning on his Kawasaki debut in 1983 at the Genoa classic in northern Italy, a country where he was heralded as a hero. He created constant drama, whether chiding spectators, withering rivals or competing with unrelenting flair, commitment and ferocity at the peak of his powers; neat, stylish, focussed, fit and, on his day, unbeatable, a restlessly driven man who said his greatest achievement was recovering from paralysis after a training crash in Dubai in 2007.

Sadly, 18 days short of his 52nd birthday, he couldn't beat leukaemia. Rest in peace at last, Georges, and thanks for everything.



Nick Haskell and Georges pose for a photo with a copy of THAT photo...



# YAKETY YAK

## DOWN UNDER!

JAKE HEADS TO NEW ZEALAND TO WELCOME IN THE NEW YEAR...

Words by Jake Nicholls Photo by Sarah Gutierrez

**H**appy New Year guys! 2012 flew by for me but to be honest it won't feel like 2013 until the first GP comes around. Blu and I celebrated the end of '12 and the start of a new year at a beach town called Mount Maunganui in the North Island of New Zealand – about 20 minutes from where Ben Townley lives.

It was pretty cool as at midnight they did a big firework display on an island out in the sea. It's the second time I spent NYE in NZ, I must admit though I always find it weird celebrating it in public with people I don't know – I'm not so into that if I'm honest.

If you're wondering why I choose NZ over Spain, Italy or the US it's simple really. I was very fortunate to become friends with Josh Coppins and Ben a few years ago, I trained and lived with both guys on separate occasions and showed my work ethic to them and they both offered me to come and stay with them here when the European winter is in full swing and the NZ summer is kicking in. I have looked up to both of them more than anyone else my whole racing life so the chance to come here and train with them in warmer climates was an honour and with my Granddad living 25 minutes away from Ben I have been here the last two years.

Josh lives on the South Island which is a beautiful place but it's about eight hours from here. The day after we arrived we were off to race called the Summer Cross which is funny really as it was reminiscent to the Brazilian GP this year – bloody wet! It was good to catch up with the friends I've gathered over there and especially Josh and his new Yamaha team which looks real cool.

It was nice to see Alex Snow who's riding for Josh over the winter period and also Scotty Columb. Snowy rode well in the mud but Ben was a level above everyone which was nice to see. He holeshot every race and later went on to explain that the concrete start was that slippery he was using third gear off the start so remember that when the Heights is a foot deep in sh\*t – hook her up to third!

Since I last wrote not a lot has gone on to be honest – just hours upon hours of training and

resting. I watched the Nitro Circus show in Birmingham with Blu and Tom which was great and a huge thanks to Ben and Chris at Red Bull for the hook up there. I'm not a huge fan of watching freestyle – even though I have a massive amount of respect for what the guys do – but I really enjoyed the Nitro show. The BMX and skaters were a pleasure to watch too. It was a shame old Travis didn't get his gangly legs over a bike and pull something out of the bag though. It was nice to bump into Geoff Walker and the beast that is Matt Banahan too – couple of top blokes.

The day after that the team arrived at my place to do some testing as the weather wasn't too bad for a couple days. It was nice to get to know my new French mechanic Gaetan – he seems like a good bloke and a very efficient mechanic. I also got to know my new team-mate Romain Febvre who's a nice lad and a talented rider.

After having not ridden properly since the end of October it was a shock to the system and after four days of testing I was spent but felt like we had improved on the set up. We also managed to hit the big jump on my track on the 250Fs albeit tapped!

We shot the breeze playing Monopoly at night. We had one game that lasted four nights but I ended up destroying them and in true French style the two mechanics and one rider borderline threw their toys out of the pram! But they are good guys and were a pleasure to have over.

My family and Blu's family had a lovely Christmas. Boxing Day felt weird as I spent it training then packing for NZ. Then the following day we flew over here! So I've got my head down over here, training hard and picking Ben's brain on how he won his world title in 2004 as that's my plan for this year. Keep an eye on my Facebook and Twitter feeds for daily updates of my trip.

Thanks for reading and I hope you all have a fun and healthy New Year. Set a goal and stick to it.

**Go hard #45!**

*J. Nicholls*





Clement Desalle, Tommy Searle and some kid in a funny hat are the guys to look out for at Hawkstone on February 10



## RIP GLYN SEMMENS

In a sad month for motocross, former AMCA sidecar rider Glyn Semmens died during December. His Brummie son Vaughan started out as dad's passenger and ended up racing 250 grands prix with

considerable success in 1979 the year he and his Doug Wheeler Maico finished second to Belgium in the MX des Nations at Ruskeasanta alongside Graham Noyce, Neil Hudson and Rob Hooper.

# INTERNATIONAL VELVET!

IT'S ALL SYSTEMS GO-GO-GO FOR THE 2013 HAWKSTONE PRE-SEASON INTERNATIONAL...

It might be pretty darn cold outside but there's one thing guaranteed to warm you up this winter and that's Hawkstone Park's perennial pre season international that goes off with a boom on **February 10!** While that might well be a whole month earlier than in years gone by don't despair because all it means in real terms is that you've got less time to wait for it to happen. Cunning eh?

It's never good to prematurely speculate but it's looking like the 2013 edition of this classic shakedown event could well be the best yet. Topping the entry list as we go to print is MX2 world champion Jeffrey Herlings who's coming back to Hawkstone to make amends for not winning a moto the last time he visited the sandy Shropshire circuit that's infamous for its

horsepower hungry hill. Soundly beaten by Christophe Charlier back then the Dutch destroyer won't have his hands full beating off that French charger this time around but he's not going to have it easy either.

Herlings' factory KTM team-mate Jordi Tixier will definitely be at the sharp end of the MX2 pack but it's probably Team CLS Monster Energy Kawasaki Pro Circuit's Arnaud Tonus who'll push Jeffrey the hardest. The Swiss star has proved he knows his way around Hawkstone really well and could pull it off if given the opportunity. Arnaud's team-mate Alessandro Lupino will make his green team debut and with more international and British stars being signed all the time the 250F division should surely be a cracker!

The MX1 entry list is currently

headed by home country hero Tommy Searle who'll be using Hawkstone in preparation for his attack on the world championship that kicks off in Qatar at the start of March. Joining Tommy in Shropshire will be Rockstar Energy Suzuki's Clement Desalle and Kevin Stribos who are no strangers to the Hawkstone podium.

As always there'll be two motos each for the MX1 and MX2 pro classes as well as the Superfinal that mixes the top 20 from each and offers the MX2 guys a small head start which makes for a fascinating finale. Entry to this year's event is a meagre £25 for adults with accompanied under-14s getting in for free. The first race kicks off at noon and the action then follows thick and fast all day. For more information log on to [www.hawkstonemx.co.uk](http://www.hawkstonemx.co.uk).



Adam Sterry will make his STR KTM debut in the MX2 class



# AX FACTOR!

## A LAST MINUTE LOWDOWN ON THE UPCOMING INDOOR SERIES...

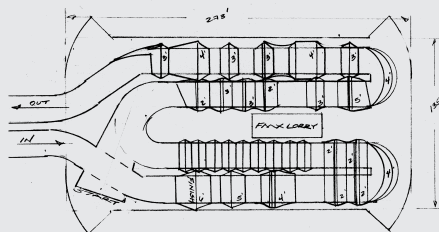
**A**s a last minute teaser to warm you up for the Arenacross-cross-cross championships, series promoter Events 22 Sports have released these track maps for each of the four rounds. Designed to encourage lots of bar-to-bar race action the Dirt Wurx designed – and about to be built – tracks are sure to test the racers and entertain the fans!

The championship kicks off at London's O2 Arena on January 12, travels to Belfast's Odyssey Arena for round two on January 19 before taking a week off. After the break the series resumes in Birmingham's LG Arena on February 2 before finishing off next to the Mersey in Liverpool's Echo Arena on February 10 in a swashbuckling Sunday matinee. Some tickets are still available so if you ain't got yours yet then head online to [www.arenacrossuk.com](http://www.arenacrossuk.com).

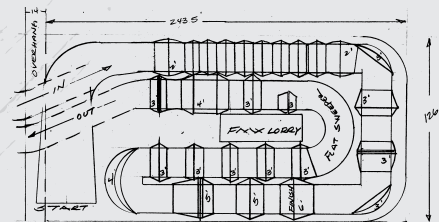
As well as the battlegrounds a full list of combatants has also been released and it's looking like it will be a battle between the Brits (big cheer) and the French invaders (boo hiss!). The title hopefuls from this side of the channel include Elliott Banks-Browne, Tom Church, Carl Nunn, Adam Chatfield, and Nev Bradshaw. The leading ticklers Francais are Fabien Izoird, Cyrille Coulon and the man who's name is the same as his favourite dessert – Eric Sorby!

It's all exciting stuff and that's before we even get to the FMX part of the show. No fewer than five freestyle motocross legends – that's Andre Villa, Edgar Torrenteras, Jamie Squibb, Disco Dave Wiggins and Chris Birch – are set to throwdown at the Arenacross hoedown and that means big whips, sick tricks and rowdy hicks.

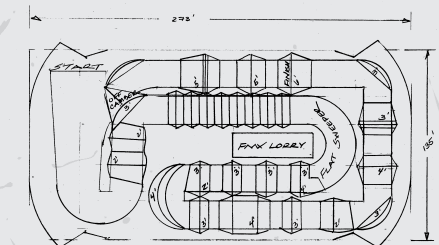
All in all it's a four show series not to be missed so make sure you're there – okay?



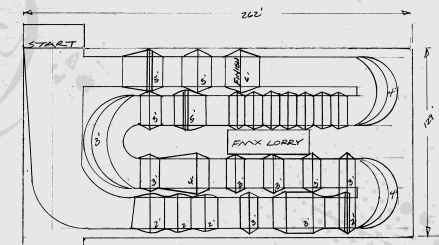
LONDON – THE O2 ARENA



BELFAST – THE ODYSSEY ARENA



BIRMINGHAM – THE LG ARENA



LIVERPOOL – THE ECHO ARENA



## IRN-BRY

### WESTWARD HO!

CALEDONIA FOR CHRISTMAS AND CALIFORNIA FOR THE NEW YEAR – IRN BRY AND BC SURE DO LIVE A JET SET LIFESTYLE...

Words by **Bryan MacKenzie** Photo by **Mikey Rutherford**

**F**irst off I hope everyone had a great Christmas and New Year. I didn't realise while writing my last column that it would be the one that was out over the festive period and so I'd just like to mention for the record that I wasn't being ignorant by not wishing everyone a merry Christmas and a happy New Year. I just totally misjudged the timing of it all.

I hope everyone had a rare old time though. For Christmas I was trying to have a low key effort by just doing the whole family dinner thing but then we popped into Pendrich gaffer Mark's Christmas party and watched them self induce a scale 10 hangover by turboing champagne mixed with energy soda – rather than me!

I honestly couldn't have joined in even if I wanted to because at dinner I'd done my own Man vs Food challenge and naturally, I won – the battle anyway because food definitely won the war! I was so full it hurt and I didn't know if I wanted to stand, sit, lie down or spew. It was worth it at the time though!

For New Year I went to Cali. Actually I'll rephrase that – over the New Year I was in Cali. I didn't come here specifically for the New Year but to actually ride. BC and I left a couple of days after Christmas and on New Year's eve we went riding to Milestone, ate pizza for dinner, drank some Irn-Bru we found in the local supermarket and the only bells I heard were from my alarm at eight am when it was time to go to Pala and ride again – rock star lifestyle!

This is my first visit to California for pre season riding and it's something that I'm sure that many people have on their bucket list. This place comes with a lot of hype about how unreal it is for motocross addicts and this year I managed to work out an opportunity with a lot of help from Kawasaki and Rad Ad at Madison.

I got loaned a bike from Kawasaki while I'm out here and was told that it was waiting for me at Pro Circuit! I got moist! Don't get me wrong I knew it wasn't a team bike or anything and it was just sent there from Kawasaki for me to pick up but just the idea of having to go to PC with a real purpose other than to perv over motorcycle porn was pretty sweet.

Picking the bike up BC and I got to meet 'the godfather' Mitch Payton himself and he took us into his office and offered his support while we are out here. He then loaded us up with a selection box of spares for BC and I took away a box of fresh kit that Madison managed to hook up for me from the guys at THOR.

So it really is like a whole new world out here. A world where motocross is accepted by Johnny

Local and if you don't have an energy drink sticker on the back of your vehicle then you're the odd one out. There are about 15 tracks all within a 40 minute radius and each track has a selection of four or five tracks that are primed up every day. It's big business.

The bike shops are the size of your local Aldi but of Marks and Spencer's quality, you don't have to argue with any servo station employees over your fuel cans ability to hold fuel because of it's lack of British Standard stamp and if you have to wash your bike at the end of the day it's your own fault for going out first after the mid-afternoon watering. The way it should be.

I've done a few days of riding so far and it's been going really well, thankfully. I think I'm riding fairly decent for this point of the year as so far I've had to go Mano a Mano each day with the local heroes. It's like they get pissed that some guy with no printed backgrounds or numbers on his shirt and the safety sticker still on his back mudguard should be faster than them on their turf and they pull out in front and then try behind me to try race. Ah well, I'll just keep doing my thing we'll see how pissed they are after I put some duck-taped 121s on there.

So it's going pretty well I guess you could say but nothing I do comes without drama. I ask you, have you ever had a slightly overweight American woman sit on your MacBook at 36,000 feet? No, just BC then...

On our way out here on the flight we were seated next to this lady. It all went Pete Tong right from the start when we turned up to our seats and she had stolen BC's window seat because she "wanted to use her pillow". After hours of uncomfortable viewing of the latest MX movies that we pre-ordered on iTunes the woman got up and tried to shimmy past us. She was no Ukrainian gymnast so we had to pack up our trays and put the laptop down so we could shuffle out to let her by.

Unfortunately though the only place to put the laptop down in the tight confines of the seating area was her now vacant seat... but because she couldn't wait the minute that it took for us to pack up to let her out and she decided to sit back down again assaulting BC's laptop with her ass in the process. As they say in the valleys – tamping, fuming, raging! The laptop got obliterated and we both looked at each other with a tear in our eye like we had just lost a family pet and we later mourned the loss with a couple of 125ml cans of Coke...

*[Handwritten signature and number 121]*





## JONTY'S BOX

### GREAT EXPECTATIONS!

AS WE ENTER 2013 JONTY GETS ALL WEEPY EYED AND PATRIOTIC ABOUT JUST HOW GREAT WE ARE...

Words and photo by Jonty Edmunds

**A**t the beginning of every season we journo types often wax lyrical about how great the coming year is going to be. That's partly because it's our job to do so but mostly because everyone's starved of race action and in need of a little lift. When the New Year rolls around there's always a renewed sense of anticipation and excitement about the coming season.

Honestly, the 2012 enduro season turned out to be as great as I initially hoped it would. Why? Because Great Britain made it great.

Though the record books show that we may not have won any Enduro World Championships on further inspection it's clear to see that the stars aligned to put Great Britain right up front in terms of international success.

While France may have ultimately reigned supreme by collecting four of the Enduro World Championships on offer and then winning the ISDE, Great Britain have certainly held their own in the EWC, hard enduro and now endurocross competition. For once we've got all bases covered and certainly where hard enduro is concerned we are the very best nation in the world.

Out of the seven major events on the hard enduro calendar, only one of the first place trophies didn't come home to the UK. And on more than one occasion – three in fact – it was an all-British podium affair. At The Tough One, Erzbergrodeo and the Red Bull Sea to Sky in Turkey, Britain scored a 1-2-3. Countless times this season Graham Jarvis has proved himself as the most resilient hard enduro rider on the planet. And when Graham missed the cut in Erzberg, Jonny Walker was there to fly the flag.

Adding additional thanks to the supreme talents of Dougie Lampkin, Paul Bolton, Ben Hemingway and Wayne Braybrook, 2012 became a season to be proud of for all concerned. And with little sign of any other nation stepping up to stop us, this is a reign that will continue for quite some time.

In endurocross we saw Jonny Walker diversify his talents to end the 2012 FIM SuperEnduro World Championship as runner up to KTM's Taddy Blazusiak. Starting the series as a relatively inexperienced endurocross rider

Walker almost failed to make the main event at round one. Fighting to win the LCQ the 21 year old Cumbrian stepped it up a notch and ended round one in fifth overall. Improving at round two in Poland he ended the night on the second step of the podium and second overall in the championship.

Suddenly out of nowhere Britain had a chance of scoring a championship medal if he could keep his nerve during the final round in Barcelona, Spain. Delivering more than what was asked of him, he duly wrapped up the runner-up position in the series while also becoming the only rider to beat Blazusiak in 14 months.

But it's in the world of timecard enduro that Britain is truly finding its feet. While David Knight has long upheld British honour on the world stage, for the first time in recent memory we've now got a wider talent pool to work with. The next generation are coming through.

In the EWC victories and podium results were scored in four of the six classes. Stepping up to the world stage for 2012 the McCanney brothers didn't fail to disappoint and Jane Daniels also found her way onto the podium on two occasions.

Up front, Danny McCanney produced a stunning debut season in the Enduro Junior class. Clocking up a remarkable eight podium results and a debut win at the GP of Finland he ended his year third overall in the series and as a heavy favourite for championship honours in the next.

His brother Jamie followed a similar path. Overcoming a serious wrist injury he bounced back to claim a win in the Enduro Youth Cup class at the season ending GP of France. Like his elder sibling he too has his sights set on becoming world champion in 2013. And with Knight beginning to fire on all cylinders again, Britain suddenly has a very real prospect of claiming three if not four Enduro World Championship titles in the season ahead.

Yes, as hard as it is to believe, everything is shaping up nicely to ensure that next year will be even greater than the last...

*Jonty*

## X HITS THE SPOT!

### ENDUROCROSS GOES GLOBAL

**A**s previously mentioned in DBR Endurocross is set to become a feature event on the world's biggest action sports tour as the X-Games goes global in 2013. Growing from one event to four, the X-Games will begin in Brazil in mid April and then visit Spain and Germany before concluding with the long established venue of Los Angeles in the US in August.

Enduro X, which was only first introduced to the action sports event in 2011 has rapidly become one of the highlights of the competition and will be included in all four stops on the X-Games tour. Held in open-air venues that will include the Olympic stadiums in Barcelona, Spain and Munich, Germany the series will feature classes for both the men and women.

Eric Peronnard, the creator of EnduroCross and ESPN's Enduro X sport organiser stated, "this is an unbelievable opportunity ESPN is offering to the world's top off-road riders. In my wildest dreams I could not have seen such an opportunity arise. X Games has elevated the world of Enduro to unthinkable levels and now we will have the possibility to shine four times a year on several continents."

## HOT DATES!

### 2013 X-GAMES SCHEDULE

<b>April 18-21</b>	Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil
<b>May 16-19</b>	Barcelona, Spain
<b>June 27-30</b>	Munich, Germany
<b>August 1-4</b>	Los Angeles, USA

## SUPERSCOUSE!

### ECHO ARENA TO HOST 2014 SUPERENDURO SEASON OPENER...

**H**ere's a date to pencil into your 2013 diary. The opening round of the 2014 FIM SuperEnduro World Championship will take place in the Echo Arena in Liverpool on November 17 2013. Making the announcement at the round one of the 2013 series in Poland series promoter Alain Blanchard confirmed that Liverpool will form round one of the proposed five round championship. Starting on November 17 the series will take in a further four rounds and end in late February.

In what will also be a considerable change from the norm Liverpool will also feature a professional SuperEnduro Cycyle race. In this unique twist mountain bike riders will race on 90 per cent of the course used by the motorcycle racers albeit not at the same time!

"We are very pleased to be able to confirm that the 2014 series will start in Liverpool," says Blanchard. "It's been tough putting together a championship for 2013 but we are already receiving applications from organisers that will ensure a great 2014 series."

## GONGS GALORE!

### FIM AWARDS DISHED OUT...

**T**he world's elite motorcycle riders took centre stage in Monaco for the annual FIM Gala to honour this year's world champions. Among the very best Moto GP and World Superbike riders, all the champions from this year's Enduro World Championship were in attendance.

On hand to accept their awards were the French quartet of Antoine Meo (E1), Pela Renet (E2), Christophe Nambotin (E3) and Mathias Bellino (EJ) along with the Women's world champ Laia Sanz.

Adding to the occasion Sanz also picked up the award for the FIM Woman of the Year for her achievements in trials, enduro and rally. On the night, Kari Tiainen and Dougie Lampkin were inducted into the FIM Hall of Fame for their achievements in enduro and trials.





© Lukasz Nazdraczev/Red Bull Content Pool

# BLAST OFF!

THE 2013 FIM SUPERENDURO WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP IS A GO-GO!

**M**arking both the end of the current season and, weirdly, the start of the next the 2013 FIM SuperEnduro World Championship kicked off in Poland at the start of December. Taking place inside the Atlas Arena stadium in the industrial city of Lodz the partisan crowd come to see just one rider – Taddy Blazusiak. And he doesn't disappoint.

Fresh from capturing his fourth consecutive AMA EnduroCross Championship in the US the Polish ace wastes little time in dialling himself in to the fast but technical course. Although trailing the British contingent of Jonny Walker (KTM) and David Knight (Honda) during the morning's practice sessions the KTM rider executes a perfect start

during the afternoon qualifier to take a solid win and with it pole position for the main event.

Debuting his shiny new Honda in Poland Knight appears to be content to follow his KTM rival as he cruises behind him to finish second. Although looking capable of pushing Knight and Blazusiak Walker makes an unfortunate mistake midway through the race to eventually finish sixth while Husaberg's Joakim Ljunggren claims third.

With pressure mounting the KTM rider's lightning fast out of the gate and emerges from the first corner in the lead. Behind him, Knight gives chase but Blazusiak's intense pace during the opening two laps create a buffer between the duo that the Manxman can't reduce. Unable to close the gap, the Manxman trails him home for

second as Blazusiak claims the first win of the night. Victim of a bad start, Walker loses touch with the leaders early on. After a dogged fight through the pack he finishes in third place.

With the start order reversed for the second final all of the top seeded riders find themselves facing a second row start. Both Knight and Blazusiak opt for an outside gate while Walker gambles on the inside. It's a tactic that pays off and as a gap emerges down the main straight he sneaks through to lead. With a clear track ahead he sets a blistering pace out front as his rivals fumble through the chaos of the first lap. Establishing a 10-second cushion the Cumbrian secures a stunning win. Looking all but assured of a British 1-2 Knight collides with a trackside banner and slips back to third allowing

Blazusiak to gladly inherit a lucky second place.

With just the third and final race left to play for Blazusiak's pain and discomfort from his injured shoulder starts to show. But with his eyes firmly on the prize he knocks out his second holeshot of the night. Controlling his pace, he tops the 10-lap final to grab an emotional overall victory. With a lap to run, Knight appears to have second overall in the bag until two lappers block his path in the rock garden. Unable to avoid them – or ride over them – he slips back to fifth as Walker, Alfredo Gomez (Husaberg) and Ljunggren ride past the stricken Manxman. Capitalising on Knight's blunder Walker takes second overall with Knight remounting to claim the final step of the podium with third.

# COUNTDOWN!

TIME'S TICKING DOWN TO THE 2013 TOUGH ONE...

**A**s we all recover from the over indulgences of the festive season let us not forget that it's not long now until the new sporting year kicks off again! Getting the 2013 hard enduro season started on Saturday January 12 the Tough One in Nantmawr Quarry will soon make all its competitors regret that extra slice of Christmas pudding.

Boasting an entry list of world-class hard enduro specialists, the race will see Husaberg's Graham Jarvis try to defend his Tough One title. But the

competition will be fierce. Heading his list of rivals is KTM's Jonny Walker and Paul Bolton and the newly mounted Beta brothers of Ben and Dan Hemingway. Add in Roof of Africa sensation Wade Young (Husaberg), Spain's Xavier Galindo (Husaberg) and Alfredo Gomez (Husaberg), Gas Gas's Alex Wigg and Danny McCannay plus Sherco's Wayne Braybrook and Fabien Planet and the stage is set for an explosive start to the season. Make sure you don't miss it.







Bubba lays down some rubber in a Suzuki test session



## BUBBA'S BRAND!

THE JAMES STEWART/TROY LEE COLLABORATION BREAKS COVER IN CALI...

**T**he Wednesday before the Anaheim 1 season opener James Stewart and Troy Lee debuted their new line of riding gear in Laguna Beach at the Troy Lee Designs store.

"I've had signature gear before but I didn't want this to just be signature gear," says Stewart. "I wanted gear that anybody could feel good wearing. Stuff that has some cool colours and stuff but still simple. Anybody can wear it, from young guys, to guys like me, to older guys riding in the woods. That's what I wanted."

It started months ago when Stewart went to Troy Lee to seek out a partner not only in design but in business. Troy Lee started out famously as the helmet painter to the stars with Troy Lee Designs in the '80s and turned that into a successful riding-gear company of his own with his TLD gear. He's an artist at heart though and when Stewart came to him he was honored.

"It's funny because I would put out some colourways on the table and

James would come in and he wasn't shy about taking some off the table right away," reckons Troy Lee. "He knew what he was looking for. He's got a great eye for this stuff."

With the Seven gear Stewart isn't just hoping to make a splash by wearing it himself but he's trying to bring his gear around at the grassroots level as well so Stewart has pulled together a few amateur racers to sponsor.

"I wanted guys who were fast obviously but the main thing I was worried about was that I wanted guys who were family-oriented," explains James. "The guys we picked up for sponsorship are all family guys and that's important to me because that's what I am."

Jace Owen, Will Markolf, Max Markolf, Jalek Swoll and Ashton Hayes will make up the amateur team.

The gear will be available to buy in September although the sportswear line will be available right away.



RV checks out his new neck protector

## RV'S ATLAS!

THE SX CHAMP GETS A NEW NECK BRACE...

**L**ast year Ryan Villopoto's Monster Energy Kawasaki teammate Jake Weimer was sporting a new neck brace from a company called Atlas. The things that made Atlas seem unique were the obvious, which is that it has two back supports instead of the traditional one support, and the less obvious, which is that it's noticeably more flexible than much of the

competition. The single back support has always been questioned by skeptics. Why would you use the spine to support a device that's supposed to protect the spine? The Atlas straddles the spine, though. Anyway, the news here is that after Villopoto gave Weimer some crap about the brace a year ago Villopoto is now wearing it too after wearing an Alpinestars brace for years.



# DEAL OR NO DEAL?

THE UNSIGNED RACERS WHO'LL BE MIA AT ANAHEIM...

While everyone's hitting the track at Anaheim 1 there are a few very capable racers who would never admit they're waiting for another racer to get hurt so they can have a ride but that's kind of what they're doing. There's Ivan Tedesco who is racing in Germany for a little bit as he waits for something to open up. Tommy Hahn is without a ride. And even Brett Metcalfe doesn't have a deal for 2013. For Metcalfe, though, it's a bit different as he's not really ready to race even if he had a ride. He's hoping for an outdoor-only deal for 2013 but it will likely have to happen on a team with a spot that opens up because a racer gets hurt.

# BACK FROM THE DEAD!

THE RACE TEAM THAT JUST WON'T GO AWAY...

The team formerly known as L&M Racing (which stood for Larry and Mike as in Larry Brooks and Mike Kranyak) which then became known as Jeff Ward Racing as of last year when Larry and Mike parted ways broke up again after signing Dean Wilson. Wilson got a ride back at Pro Circuit but the team didn't go away.

Nearly the whole team is still intact apparently although team manager Paul Delaurier wouldn't tell us much except "look for us at Anaheim." The team will be hitting the track with Josh Hansen but the rest of it is still kind of up in the air until we see them on Saturday. Sponsors don't make a huge difference since Kranyak is an oil millionaire but we'll know more once the series kicks off.

# DREAM TEAM!

WHY LIFE IS PEACHY AT JOE GIBBS RACING

Joe Gibbs Racing Yamaha has had the most success and the most fun with two racers – Josh Grant and Justin Brayton. Grant has been away for a couple of years racing for factory Honda and then Jeff Ward Racing and Brayton spent 2012 at factory Honda himself. They're both returning to JGR for 2013 and while Brayton is doing most of his testing back east Grant isn't.

Grant has been out in California, and when we caught up with him at the test track he was the only guy quadrupling a section on the Yamaha test track. And he was making it look easy. Grant looks really smooth and solid and frankly he seems happy. If you're looking for a dark horse for 2013 – look at him. He's always had the speed to win on any given weekend but flying under the radar is a bit more his style. When people are talking about him the pressure seems to get to him but as it sits he seems happy to surprise some people this year.

# ANGELS' DELIGHT!

ANAHEIM GETS A THIRD RACE AS DODGERS STADIUM GETS DUMPED

I used to be that the California swing of the Monster Energy/AMA Supercross Series hit Angel Stadium in Anaheim three times but a couple of years ago the Los Angeles Supercross made its return with Dodger Stadium hosting what would've otherwise been the Anaheim 2 round. Well, about a month before the start of the series for 2013, the Los Angeles round was nixed and the event is now returning to Anaheim. Don't worry though – the track map is the same as they're both baseball stadiums. The event just moved about 30 miles is all.



# AMERICAN IDIOT

## HEADCASE!

COX WAXES LYRICAL ABOUT A NEW HELMET BRAND WHICH IS LIKE A PROTECTIVE CASE FOR YOUR HEAD...

Words and photo by Steve Cox

Remember a few issues ago when I went on a rant of sorts about concussions and how important it is that we pay attention to them? Well, finally, someone has done something.

Introducing the new 6D helmet. It's not a new model of a pre-existing helmet company – it's an all-new helmet. And it had to be done this way because in a world where all helmets are more or less the same this is the first real design change in probably a half-century.

Since just about the invention of the helmet with a hard outer shell helmets have had basically the same design. Working in layers from the rider's head out, there's a padded helmet liner, then a harder polystyrene layer to absorb impacts and then the hard outer shell. This basic design first hit the market in 1957.

Sure, there have been changes to the shell from plastic to fiberglass to carbon-fiber and even the polystyrene layer has been updated to include dual layers on some models with a softer layer closer to the head and a stiffer layer closer to the shell but the basic design hasn't changed in ages. Until now.

The 6D helmet is the first helmet that throws a curve ball at the traditional design as this helmet still has the hard outer shell, two layers of polystyrene and the helmet lining but the magic is what's in between the two polystyrene layers.

Between those two layers is the company's Omni-Directional Suspension (ODS) system. The idea is based on physics – which, if you think about it is what all safety ideas should probably be based on. So, to start with, let's start with basic physics –  $F=MA$ . That is the basic Newtonian physics equation that calculates Force. It says that Force (F) equals Mass (M) times Acceleration (A). So the heavier something is and/or the faster it's traveling the more force it carries with it. Obviously the opposite is also true in that the lighter something is and the slower it's traveling the less force it's carrying with it.

Another point is that when you hit the ground – or, more appropriately when your head hits the ground – the impact is rarely direct which is how most standards are tested. And even if it is direct, it turns out that the physics of most crashes tell us that the traveling speed of the rider on the motorcycle is not very indicative of the speed of the head hitting the ground. Subject to gravity, for most crashes, the head hits the ground at a dropping speed from its

height, not at this dropping speed plus traveling speed as traveling speed is lateral while dropping speed is vertical and it's the vertical that makes you hit the ground. In other words blame gravity.

So, can it be that we've been seeing so many concussions in our sport because the helmets themselves are just too stiff? I've personally seen a representative of one helmet company put his helmet on the floor and stand on it to prove how strong it is. Is that what we want on our heads?

According to the people at 6D the answer is no.

So back to the ODS. The ODS is an array of engineered elastomeric isolation dampers. In English, it's a bunch of little shocks made of a flexible elastomer. They not only absorb shocks in a linear manner by compressing but perhaps more importantly they absorb shocks laterally by flexing one way or another and even by breaking altogether. Even with the helmet secure and safe on the rider's head, the outer part of the helmet can twist and move under impact and any sort of twisting or movement absorbs energy that may otherwise go into the rider's head.

Although I can't show you this in a column in Dirt Bike Rider the presentation of this technology included super-slow-motion footage of a crash-test-dummy head in a 6D helmet as it takes a heavy, glancing blow and it's unbelievable how much energy must be dissipated in this sort of impact.

If you go to youtube.com and type in '6D Angular Test Slow Motion Video' you can see what I'm talking about here. And no, this helmet isn't really any bigger due to the ODS than any other helmet is.

This could be a game-changer in helmet technology. And the thing is it very well could just be the start. The important thing is to change the thinking, and if this technology works like they say it does – and I believe that it likely does – it's not unthinkable and may even be likely that another company will take this idea in a different direction and make it even better than this. Or maybe even 6D will.

The helmet will be out soon in the USA and not very long afterwards in Europe.

Now, fair warning, it's not cheap. The 6D website says they expect the helmet will retail for \$745. But you know the old saying – if you've got a \$10 head buy a \$10 helmet.







# CREATURES FROM THE BLACK LAGOON!

A WETTER THAN NORMAL WINTER MEANS THE WILD N' WOOLLY IS AN ABSOLUTE MUD BATH...

**W**ith 2012 being the wettest year since records began it's little wonder that the water crossings at the Wild n' Woolly are the deepest they've ever been and that means the annual Boxing Day bash in Blisworth, Northamptonshire tests man and machine like never before.

For the past few years the win at the annual charity epic – that this time raised around £3000 for local charities as well as the Air

Ambulance and Help for Heroes – has been fought over by 10-time winner Ryan Griffiths, 2010 champ Jack Lee and South Midland centre maestro Dale Raynor. And things are no different this time around...

Raynor yanks the holey and leads for over half the race but Lee's charging hard and seems to be quicker through the water holes while Raynor has the speed advantage on the open going. With the end ever nearing it's obvious – barring any major catastrophe –

that one of these two will end up winning. But which one?

The pair enter the final lap yards apart and continue the battle right up until the last corner but as the chequered flag is unfurled it's Jack Lee who takes the win on his Gas Gas leaving Raynor and his Honda to collect second place in what's described by many as the closest finish ever in 87 editions of this ridiculously tough one hour event. Third overall is Griffiths – albeit two laps behind the leading pair.

## RESULTS

1	Jack Lee	Gas Gas	17 laps
2	Dale Raynor	Honda	17
3	Ryan Griffiths	Honda	15
4	James Barnwell	Honda	15
5	Adam Castledine	Suzuki	13
6	Matt Willis	KTM	13







Jack Lee uses any advantage he can to stay clear of the chasing pack



# DANGEROUS

## CHOPPER!

LEE'S BRAND NEW FLYING MACHINE GETS HIM INTO SOME STUPIDLY STICKY SITUATIONS OVER THE FESTIVE PERIOD...

Words by Lee Dunham Photo by Richard Blyth

So who else got a remote controlled helicopter for Christmas then? I'm on about the mini ones that you charge in a second before you're off flying around the house like a legend! I'm addicted and mine has gone from hitting the TV, bouncing off the ceiling and just about every ornament in my parents' house to finally battling the stairs before I mastered landing it on tables.

But now I've reached a whole new level – landing on hands and heads! Although here's a warning... If your girlfriend has long hair and is happily watching a movie do not try and land it on her head – it results in all her hair being sucked into the propellers and no matter how hard you try to get it out you can't and then you need to cut it out! Poor helicopter.....

How could I forget? I want to wish everyone a huge happy New Year! I hope you all had a fantastic few weeks of eating just about everything you could lay your eyes on over the Christmas period but now its back to the grindstone. For me it's all about kit washing, bike prepping and wet training days on the bikes where I turn into a roll-off and tear-off monster! These are the days racing is all about slumming it in the back of my mate's rusty tranny with blue roll everywhere as I try to prep goggles for the next session...

Sharky Neale and I have got ourselves a pretty cool training track near my home that we're using and although the rain seems to outweigh pretty much everything at the moment it's stayed pretty well drained. It feels so good to be back on a bike and was kinda like opening

that first Christmas or birthday present – so good that you just want more. Although I was feeling pretty rusty at first and making the flat track look like Foxhill in the mud things are finally on the right track again!

Oh, and my new bike is insane and I'm not gonna lie – Apico International have hooked me up with a sick new look this year! A lot of people have been asking what number I'll be running this year. It's gonna revert back to 28 instead of 1. Some people ask me why 28? Well it's my first ever number from my first race and my first bike and for me it's a keeper although winning the championships gave me the #1 which I hope to get back for 2014. But for now 28 is my number.

As it stands my first race will be at Dunkirk! So at the moment were boating it backwards and forwards as often as we can to get in the sand and train! For anyone who doesn't know sand riding is bloody difficult for most people as it requires a totally different style of riding. Like most I find it tough too so the more training the better. Also riding in sand helps exfoliating – it gets everywhere and for the next few rides your still finding sand in your boots and pretty much everything else!

So with everything that's going on here and there it's been pretty busy! If you want to keep up to date between columns my twitter is @leedunham28. Keep safe and remember that the more you put in the more you get out!

Ride On Tedo!

*Lee Dunham*  
#28





Tommy looks right at home on the 450 and in his new Acerbis race kit n'all...

# QUICKFIRE QUESTION TIME!

## TWO TICKS WITH TOMMY SEARLE...

**W**ith the opening round of the world championship now just weeks away we tracked down Tommy Searle to find out how he's feeling about travelling to Qatar and Thailand and how he sees those pesky mixed capacity motos working out...

**DBR:** The season's fast approaching now – how do you feel about travelling so far for the first two GPs?

**TS:** "Good! It makes no difference to me and it's good to get out of the cold – it's sh't going to the first GP and it being freezing cold! Out there it should be nice and warm and it'll be new to everyone too – it's neutral ground and not like having the first one in Holland where everyone then has to go and ride so they're not at a disadvantage. I think the tracks are gonna be good out there

too so I think it'll be a nice start to the season."

**DBR:** And what about the mixed capacity races?

**TS:** "It's not an issue to me at all because I think I'm fast enough to get out of the way. The only 250 guy I can see giving us any grief is Jeffrey. Obviously it's a lot worse for the 250 guys than it is for us because I think we'll beat them out of the start and then we won't see them for the rest of the race."

**DBR:** How would you feel if you got taken out by someone who's not even in your class though?

**TS:** "If a 250 guy took me out that would piss me off but that's the same if anyone took me out. That stuff happens and I'm sure it's gonna happen multiple times – that a 250 and a 450 guy come

together – but I just hope it doesn't happen to me. It is what it is and I'll just be getting on with it."

**DBR:** How do you feel about the move to MX1 in general?

**TS:** "My goal is to go in there and win races and be on the podium as much as I can and see where that puts me towards the end of the year. It will be a bit different on the 450 and it will be a bit of a learning curve but I've raced all these guys before and I've beaten them all before."

**DBR:** And that's including Cairoli...

**TS:** "Yeah, I've beaten him plenty of times and even that year when he crashed out of the championship me and Tyla were ahead of him in the points when he hurt himself. I beat him straight up plenty of times back then and that's when I was 17 and he was

22. Of course, he is strong and you can see that and he has six world titles and I haven't got any... He's a great rider and he's gonna be the one to beat."

**DBR:** Does it ever bother you that you've not won a major title yet?

**TS:** "To be honest it doesn't bother me at all. I have a good life right now and I've always been able to get good rides and good deals. I've made good money every year that I've raced and racing is my job so that's important. I feel like I have a great life. I still use wanting to win a world championship as motivation when I'm in the gym. Time's not running out but it is ticking on and I know I have to do it on a 450 now because my opportunity to win a 250 world title is gone – that's out of the window. I believe I can do it on a 450 and I know I'm a good enough rider to race for the title right away."





# WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN!

**A DECADE EUROPE RACE PACKAGE WORTH WAY OVER £500...**

**T**he new race season's about to start and you're probably about ready to go out and splash some cash on new racewear, goggles and other essential bits and bobs – like a bike stand, a mat to put it on and a fresh fuel can to replace that one you threw at next door's cat and never got round to retrieving from its tea towel holder.

While cruelty towards cats is not something we condone here at DBR Towers getting fresh swag is and to celebrate Christmas – and the start of the New Year – we've hooked up with the darlings at Decade Europe to offer you the chance to win a race package worth way over £500!

This pukka prize is basically comprised of a set of JT Evo Lite racewear (jersey, gloves and pants), three pairs of 100% goggles (1 x Racecraft, 1 x Accuri and 1 x Strata) and a Matrix M2 Worx stand, M7 Trux mat and M3 Utility can and by our reckoning is pretty damn cool.

To be in with a chance of winning this decadent Decade Europe race package we need you to answer this really easy question.

**Which rider was spotted (geddit?) wearing JT Racing's 2013 Limited Edition Dalmation racewear at the Monster Energy Cup?**

**Was it:** **A:** Mike Alessi  
**B:** Mike Metzger  
**C:** Mike Rotch  
**D:** Mike and the Mechanics

If you think you know the answer log on to our website – [www.dirtbikerider.com](http://www.dirtbikerider.com) – and follow the competitions link in dirtZone or use your smartphone to scan this funky **QR code** which'll take you right there. The competition closes on **February 7** when the first correct answer plucked out of our pink prize pocket by our trucker 'tache wearing internet hipopotamus Hank Hill will win this awesome race package.







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**Supplier:** decade-europe.com  
**Contact:** 01792 469811



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Although its name makes it sound like a character out of a Roger Hargreaves book this Suomy Mr Jump helmet is actually pretty awesome and will be used this year by top racers like Tommy Searle and Brad Anderson. Mr Jump is 100 per cent handmade in Italy from a new composite material that's a combination of carbon and aramidic fibres which means nowt to me but is apparently very lightweight but also the daddy at protecting your noggin. Coming in different designs and colours you really need to see and feel a Mr Jump to appreciate it fully so take a spin out to your local Suomy dealer today...

**Price:** from £259.99  
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**Supplier:** apico.co.uk  
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**Contact:** 02892 699770



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**Price:** Chain lube £5.76 + VAT

Contact cleaner £6.30 + VAT

Octane booster £3.38 + VAT

**Supplier:** lucasoil.co.uk

**Contact:** 01248 723666

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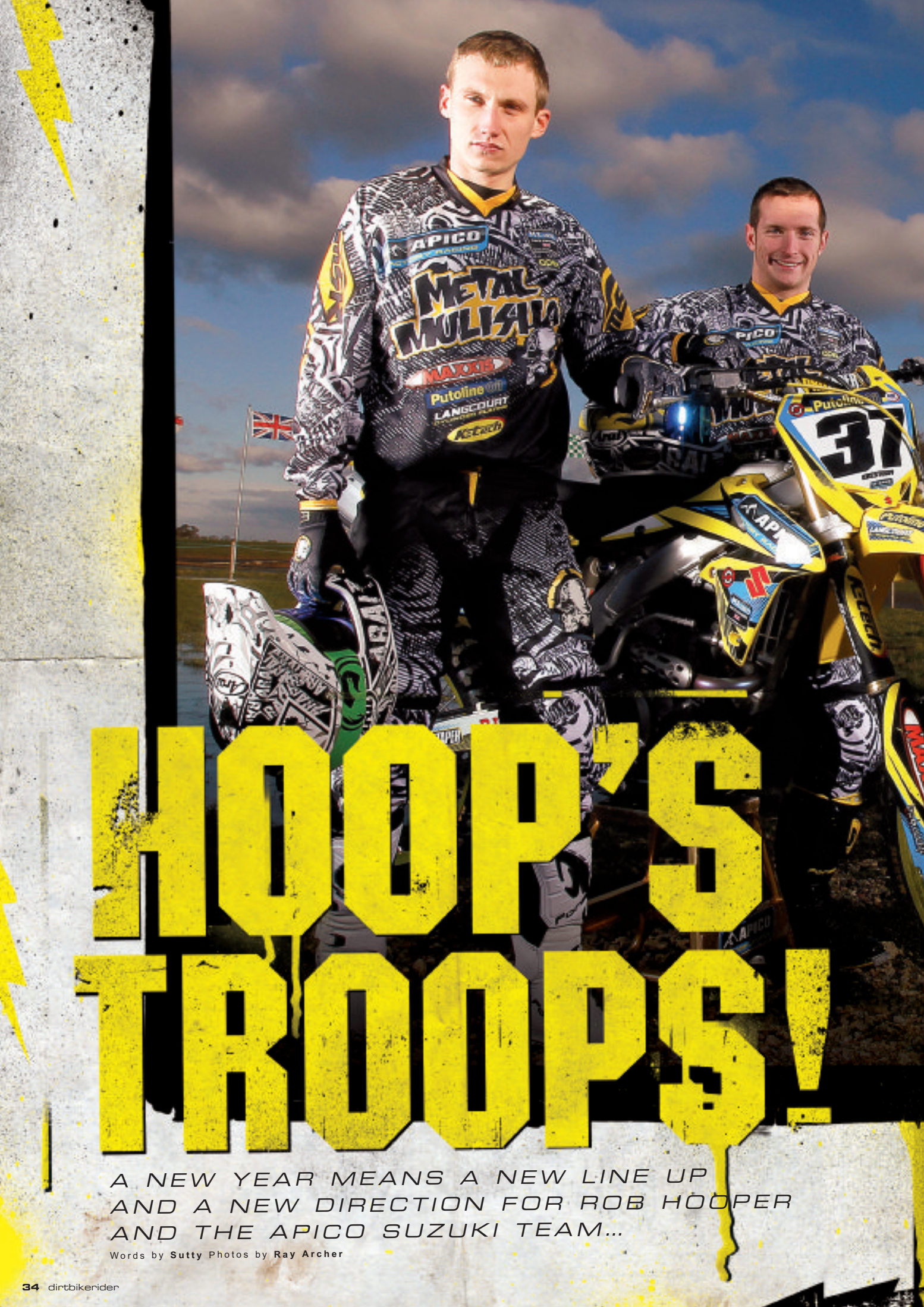
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# HOOPER'S TROOPS!

A NEW YEAR MEANS A NEW LINE UP  
AND A NEW DIRECTION FOR ROB HOOPER  
AND THE APICO SUZUKI TEAM...

Words by Suttty Photos by Ray Archer



Rob Hooper's proud as punch with his new team





**T**he past few years have been less than kind to Apico Suzuki team boss Rob Hooper who since losing major funding from a corporate sponsor just days before the start of the 2010 race season has seemed to suffer nothing but bad luck. While some might say you make your own it'd be a brave man who reminded Rob of that one as year after year he carefully lines up his ducks only for Lady Luck to come and mow them down with her AK-47...

While 2010 was a complete no-go after Relentless failed to deliver any of the finances promised and Hooper was forced to release Martin Barr and Scott Columb from their contracts weeks before the season began he actually reckons that 2012 was the team's worst year ever. That all started to go wrong at the tail end of 2011 as Steven Clarke upped sticks and shipped out to Australia just before the winter supercross series – that he was a favourite to win – kicked off.

Things then got much worse as injuries ran riot. First of all Lewis Gregory hurt himself in indoors action and then Scuba Steve's replacement – Luke Hawkins – picked up an injury or two too. Although Gregory returning sporadically throughout the year at one point in the season Rob was left with no riders at all which meant calling up reserve racer Jamie Skuse to solely represent. >>

Stuey Edmonds destroys a FatCat berm on the Apico Suzuki



## IRISH EYES!

### SPOTLIGHT ON STUEY...

After representing TM for what seemed like an eternity Stuey '162ey' Edmonds initially moved over to the yellow side as a stand in for Steven Clarke in the 2011/12 FWSX series. Appearing to get on well with the RM-Z from the off the Dubliner was soon snatched up by the TAS Suzuki team for a full attack on the UK scene until the Ulster outfit decided to concentrate on road racing once more and the 24-year-old was left without a ride until Rob stepped in to save the day.

"It was touch and go for a while there but Rob kindly got something sorted for me and put up a really good deal," says Stuey. "I enjoyed riding the Suzuki from the moment I got on it and last year with TAS was a nice step up for me after being on TMs for years."

"I was a bit nervous coming into 2012 so I trained hard all winter and I showed that my speed is there and my results were good – it was my best year ever. The guys at Tyco and my trainer Phil were able to push me on. I wouldn't be where I am now without their help and hopefully we'll be able to keep pushing on with Rob and all the knowledge he's able to share. It's nice to be on the team – I get on well with Rob and that's important to me."

"I like to set my goals high. I'd like to finish top five in the Maxxis and I know that's going to be hard. A lot of people are saying the foreign riders like Barragan and Ramon will be fast but we know the tracks very well and I've been riding them all my life. In the Pro Nationals I definitely want top three."





# HEY GERT!

## HOOP'S HOT IMPORT...

Quiet and steely-eyed like all true eastern European antiheroes should be Gert Krestinov's performances quite often go under the radar which is weird considering the way in which he originally made his presence felt on the world scene. Anyhoo, despite finishing third in both the British championship and Red Bull Pro Nationals the Estonian found himself without a ride until Rob made him an offer he couldn't refuse.

"I was without a deal for such a long time and then I heard that Rob was looking for a rider so I gave him a call and he was really interested," explains Gert. "A couple of days later he made me an offer. The deal with Rob is just to do the UK races – the Maxxis, Red Bull and Masters and if I want to I can do the GPs as well so I checked the schedule and I can do maybe three GPs and some international races also."

"I know it's going to be tough but I made some really good results last year and I'm hoping to be in the top three in the Maxxis again. I was also third in the Red Bull but I'd like to win that this year."

"I will start riding in January and primarily it will be just to get a feel for the bike before we get into testing. I try not to start riding too early because it's easy to burn out and we'll have to see how the weather is too. I would like to do some riding in England but it might be that we have to travel to Spain to ride – in Estonia it's that cold I'd have to use spikes in the tyres!"

Already a GP winner Gert Krestinov is hungry for more success





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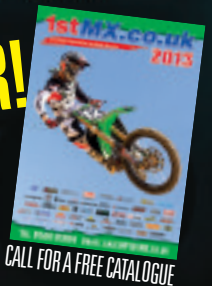
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# REMEMBERED!

## ROB'S OLD MAN BOB...

By Jack Burnicle

Bob Hooper passed away in December at the age of 86. A keen Midlands motocrosser during the 1950s Bob was brought up in his parents' pub, The Chetwynd, in the village of Upper Longdon near Lichfield. And 'The Chet' aptly hosted a funeral wake for its longstanding local resident. Bob was a mechanic for the National Coal Board, working on steam trains – the other love of his life besides his pretty Irish wife May and motorcycles! He raced Norton, BSA, Metisse and latterly, a homebrewed Tribsa. Bob also built exquisite miniature steam trains. "He could make anything," says his son Rob. "If anyone in Upper Longdon had a problem they'd go and see Bob Hooper!"

Robert started racing at 13 on a bike built by Bob. "I had a poster of Jeff Smith and his BSA Victor on my wall and wanted a bike that looked like that," smiles Hoop. "So Dad made me one from a 200cc Triumph Tiger Cub. It was too big for 125 schoolboys so I first raced with the AMCA at Freeman's Farm (owned by Brad Freeman's grandad) in Brereton in May 1968. I remember practising and Dad told me I wasn't doing one bit right, put his cap on backwards and showed me how! But he never put any pressure on me. He'd have been quite happy to stay AMCA."

Instead they went on to win the last ever Shell Under-21 national championship on an AJS, entered the inaugural British Open series and grand prix racing in 1975 on a Husqvarna and spent seven seasons travelling the world and a further five mainly in the UK until Hoop retired at the end of 1986 to become Suzuki team manager. The NCB allowed unlimited unpaid leave so the phlegmatic, unflappable Bob Hooper would drive colossal distances abroad, chewing on an ever-present cigar stub. "Then he changed to a pipe," says Rob. "He'd fill and light it while driving the van with his elbows and move off into a St Bruno moment!"

They four times represented Great Britain in the Motocross and Trophee des Nations finishing second to Roger de Coster's Belgium at the 1979 MX des in Finland and Rob placed top five in the British Open championship on a Maico. I first accompanied them to the 1976 Dutch 250GP, arriving in Lichtenvoorde at dead of night to witness a hilarious Norman Wisdomeque erection of their awning, illuminated by side-splittingly funny, bone-dry Midlands humour.

"That first year in 250GPs we did six rounds on the trot," remembers Hoop. "Belgium, followed by Czech, Poland, Russia, Yugoslavia and Italy, travelling in convoy with Geoff Mayes and Sam Smith. There was no decent food behind the Iron Curtain so when we got into Yugoslavia Dad went straight to a butcher's and made a big beef stew. We were starving and it tasted wonderful! Dad was not only a good mechanic, he could cook as well. He was priceless."

While a lesser man might have called it quits Rob's regrouping for what he hopes will be the most successful season ever for his Suzuki squad. And to achieve that he's headed in a different direction.

"There's a new emphasis for the team and we're now making a major effort in MX1 where in the past we've always majored in the MX2 class," explains Rob. While Hooper will still run a pair of 250F pilots – Lewis Gregory and Jamie Skuse – it's burly Dubliner Stuey Edmonds and Maxxis and RBPN bronze medallist Gert Krestinov who will be the main focus.

"I'm expecting a lot of podiums from them and I don't think that's being overly ambitious," continues Hoop. "I think that if Gert can ride as he did in the latter half of 2012 again I know he'll be in there in the mix. There are a lot of people saying how strong MX1 is going to be with different people coming in but that's said each year. Gert is familiar with our tracks and he knows the way it works in the UK. In my mind he goes a little bit under the radar but when you look at the results he's very visible and at the last Red Bull at Culham he was absolutely flying. You also don't get third in the

British championship just on luck alone.

"I think that Stuart had a breakthrough year in 2012. He'd always done very well on the TM and then came and did a couple of supercross races for the team and impressed me immensely. I was somewhat disappointed that we weren't able to put together a deal for Stuart last year as my team was already set and what budget we had was already allocated.

"I watched him all year on the TAS Suzuki though and feel he had some really impressive, strong rides. You can see he's totally committed and when he's racing he's giving it everything he's got and that's why I'm looking forward to having him in the team. What I want from riders is commitment – we put a lot in and I want the riders to do the same. There's absolutely no question with Stuart that every time he's on the bike he's racing and not just riding."

The pair will be armed with 2013 RM-Z450s. Having worked with the RM-Z range for the past eight years Rob has plenty of experience with Suzuki machinery and he's confident the 450 is more than capable of running at the front of the pack.

"In stock form the bike is superb – I >>

Lewis Gregory's no stranger to Hooper's team







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**Jamie Skuse and Lewis Gregory**  
try and look tough

# SUPPORTING ACT!

## KEEPING IT OLD-SCHOOL WITH THE QUARTER-LITRE CREW...

For years the main focus for Rob Hooper's racing efforts has been the 125cc/MX2 class and although the majority of the team's manpower is now focussed on the fo-fiddies there'll still be a pair of 250F pilots flying Apico Suzuki team colours. Lewis Gregory and Jamie Skuse should need little introduction to DBR readers but because we're thorough we're gonna give you the lowdown on them anyway...

Now 27 Lewis Gregory has been around on the scene for a fair old while but after a promising start to his pro career injuries slowed his progress and he struggled for a few years before quitting the sport albeit temporarily. After a couple of years off he made a strong return at the tail end of 2011 but suffered another troublesome term last year. Ever the fighter Lewis is looking for better results in 2013.

"I'm feeling good again now," says Lewis. "The start of 2012 was tough after my supercross injury but as soon as I got on the 250F again I felt much better. First off I'm happy to be staying MX2 and I'll be looking to improve as the season goes on. I think top five should be achievable in the Maxxis though."

Lulu's team-mate is 24-year-old Wiltshire lad Jamie Skuse who's looking to break into the top-10 in the Maxxis while also defending his Phoenix Tools South West championship too. The #600 racer has acquitted himself well on Hooper's 450 but how he'll do in a full season of MX2 competition remains to be seen.



**Krestinov loves the sand almost**  
as much as his new Suzuki



**Jamie's hoping for top 10**  
results in the Maxxis

have total faith in Suzuki bikes. The bikes are good and we will stay with Showa suspension and work with that. I think with the 450 the emphasis will move more towards set-up and suspension – obviously we'll need to make some adjustments to the motor but the majority of the work will be on making the bikes comfortable for the riders. To me it's important that the bike stays basically within its standard form but we will do whatever is needed to be competitive within our financial means."

And money in the team is tight! Despite all appearances suggesting otherwise the Apico Suzuki squad isn't the manufacturer's official team and actually only gets a small amount of support from Suzuki even though Rob's run their

colours for almost a quarter of a century. After TAS pulled back to being a tarmac only concern once more many felt the team was a shoo-in to receive the support but that proved not to be the case as Neil Prince's Heads & All Threads outfit received it instead.

"I'm not gonna hide the fact that I'm disappointed that we didn't get the premier support from Suzuki," says Rob diplomatically. "I feel that we had a good case to get it but unfortunately the decision didn't go our way. My primary focus now is to have a good year and then we'll see what happens. We've come off two very disappointing seasons but now we know what the decision is from Suzuki we've just got to get our heads down and get on with it and do the best we can."





# GOING S

*AFTER A TROUBLESOME 2012 DK'S VOWED TO COME BACK FITTER, FASTER AND MORE DETERMINED THAN EVER - HE'S ALSO GOING IT ALONE AND RUNNING HIS OWN TEAM...*

Words and photos by Future 7 Media

**W**hen you set your standards as high as David Knight anything less than a win is regarded as a loss. Returning from an injury-plagued 2011 season, Knight entered the 2012 Enduro 3 World Championship looking leaner and faster than ever. Early test sessions indicated that the three-time Enduro World Champion was back to his very best. But things didn't work out

anything like the burly Manxman hoped they would...

Aside from a 10th British Enduro Championship title last year just didn't go to plan. Bike set-up issues, machinery changes, injuries and a derailed sense of confidence left Knight fighting an uphill battle for the majority of the season. It seemed that for every positive step forward he tried to make, an equally negative one pushed him back.

While DK did manage to steal a win

away from the man who went on to be world champion Christophe Nambotin in Italy it was otherwise a largely disappointing season. Unable to fight for the world title he had originally set his sights on the Manxman slipped down the final championship standings and ended his year fourth in class.

With 2012 firmly put to rest David is focused on getting himself back in the game for 2013 having opted to go it alone and set-up his own Honda backed team... >>





A podium in Poland was a decent debut for David on the brand-new Honda





**DBR:** It's been a tough year but are you able to remain positive about 2012?

**DK:** "Overall it's been a difficult year but to still come away from it finishing fourth overall in E3 and then winning the BEC was decent enough. But it's been a tough year that just never really got going the way that I had wanted it to. My biggest setback out of everything that happened was missing the GP of Finland. Up until that point I was second in the world championship and although I wasn't going to beat Christophe I could have finished as the next best rider to him. Unfortunately it didn't happen."

**DBR:** What happened in Finland?

**DK:** "It was the GP of Sweden the weekend before and KTM had given me a different engine to use than the one I used at the previous GP. Basically, I struggled all weekend to get it running how I wanted and coming into the GP of Finland I knew that I'd still have problems. On day one in Finland I pushing hard in the places I was confident in to try and make up for the time I was losing elsewhere. In truth I was probably risking it a little too much and on the enduro test I lost the front end on a section of roots. I managed to save myself from crashing but in doing so took the full force of the handlebars into my chest. Straight away I knew I was hurt and had to sit the race out."

**DBR:** That crash then sparked off another injury, which resulted in stomach surgery. How difficult was it to finish the season injured?

**DK:** "It wasn't easy. Getting hurt in Finland triggered off another problem for me. Scans showed that I had a cut on the lining of my stomach that was causing some internal bleeding. It was nothing major but it was having an effect on my health and to fix it required a small operation. Scheduling the operation before the final round of the EWC wasn't ideal but I was determined to at least finish out the season. During the weekend before France I managed to win my 10th BEC title but ultimately it took its toll on my fitness. Between riding the BEC, travelling to France and then walking special tests I didn't have a whole lot of energy left to race – I just got through it as best I could."

**DBR:** During the pre-season everything looked to be on track for a successful year. You appeared to be fit, healthy and very motivated for the championship to begin. Did you feel ready?

**DK:** "After missing most of 2011 through injury I never got a chance to develop the new bike that KTM brought out. In a way I started the winter months sort of behind on where I should have been if I'd just come off a full season. On tracks that I knew I felt really confident on the bike and my speed was fast but it was when we came to new ground that I couldn't get the bike to work. We struggled a lot with the set-up of the rear end, it never felt settled on fresh terrain and I couldn't get it to turn in the corners. We tried our best but just couldn't find a solution. I think the most frustrating part was not being able to pinpoint the cause of the problem."

**DBR:** Although you switched to the 300EXC for EWC you still rode the four-stroke in the BEC – why was that?

**DK:** "I didn't want to completely ditch the four-stroke. It was a good bike so we agreed that I would continue to race it in the BEC. I never really had an issue with the bike in that championship because it wasn't the same bike that I was racing in the EWC and I was able to change a lot more on the bike to get it right. In the EWC our hands were tied but in the BEC we had more freedom to test things and it didn't take long to get it right."

**DBR:** Looking back do you think the mid-season

*Switching between the KTM two-stroke and four-popper was far from being an ideal situation*



switch to the 300 was the right move – you're known as more of a four-stroke rider?

**DK:** "At the time it wasn't an easy decision to make but it was one I knew I needed to do. In E3 the rest of the guys were riding two-stroke bikes and I felt that if I joined them at least I would be on the same level as them. But it was a long time since I rode a two-stroke in EWC competition – 12 years ago in fact – so the switch didn't come easy."

"At the GP of Italy I brought my own bike to the race and I won on it straight away. I felt good there but was still making a number of small

mistakes. My cornering was off as I was riding it like a bigger bike. Then in Sweden, I rode the factory bike and the engine was different. Again I had to try and adapt to riding it and that's why I struggled. I think if I had more time to focus on just one bike instead of jumping from bike to bike then I could have made it work but I learned a lot and realised that I'm a better four-stroke rider."

**DBR:** Did you expect Nambotin to be so strong?

**DK:** "I always knew he'd be the guy to beat but when I saw him at the KTM test session in





## DK ON...

### BEING MINTED!

"As a way to honour my achievements the Manx postal office have commissioned my own 50p coin that will go into circulation on the Isle of Man. I did ask them for a couple of £500 pound notes because I'll need as much of them as I can get but it wasn't happening!"

### ENDUROCROSS

"Along with the EWC I'll also contest the endurocross race at the X Games. The X-Games always looks pretty cool and it's something that I've wanted to try for a while. There's a lot of emphasis on that one event and if I can get a good result it will be massive for the team."

January I could see he was still struggling to adapt to the bike. At the time I thought he had made a big mistake leaving Gas Gas because he clearly wasn't comfortable on the KTM. When we were riding together he could see that I was quicker than him so I think it motivated him to work harder. After that test session he changed a lot of things and came out swinging in Chile and for the rest of the season he was on fire. Maybe I showed my hand too soon and gave him a benchmark to aim for."

**DBR:** Injuries have hampered your progress

during the last two years. Is it simply that doing so much riding between '05 and '08 has finally caught up with you?

**DK:** "I don't believe that's the reason. During those years I never really injured myself or rode with an injury to cause problems in the years to come. The doctors informed me that my hip injury was heredity and was brought on due to being overly active as a child. I think that doing as many races as I did back then helped me a lot. I believe I was at my best because I was always riding a bike and constantly race sharp. "Next year my plan is to do more riding and

try to take in more races than what I have been doing. Some weeks I'll race enduro then other weeks I'll try an extreme enduro or an endurocross. I feel that system works best for me and if I'm having fun riding my bike then the results should follow."

**DBR:** Since '05 there seems to have been a change in the style of the layout of special tests at the EWC. Are you pleased with the direction it's headed?

**DK:** "No. I think races have become too easy and too 'motocross like' in the last couple of >>>





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years. About 10 years ago we experienced the same sort of thing where the special tests were becoming too easy but during '05 and '06 the organisers grew some balls and toughened them up. Unfortunately now I feel the trend is slipping back towards what it was like in '03. I'm not saying that they should be impossible to ride but they should be tougher than what they are. Enduro is supposed to be physical but it's also a thinking man's sport – lines change each lap and you need to be able to adapt to that. For the majority of the events this season that wasn't the case – I think things are being played too safe."

**DBR:** Before the GP of Portugal began there was a lot of controversy regarding the extreme test as sections of it were altered by riders. What was your feeling on the matter?

**DK:** "I was furious. I feel that when the organising club sets out a special test then that's the test we should ride. In Portugal a number of Spanish and Italian riders brought hammers with them to alter the course. They smashed the edges off the rock steps we had to ride up and moved rocks to make the track easier to ride. They said they were doing it to make it better for the women riders but in truth they were doing it to suit themselves. I complained about what they had done but no action was taken. However, when I put some of the rocks back in, I was the one that got in trouble for it."

"The situation in Portugal was ridiculous because the special test was brilliant – world class. It was tough and would have been a good place to gain some time. In the end it became too easy and there was no advantage to be had on it. It was boring to ride and probably just as boring to watch."

**DBR:** How do you feel about having lesser classes like the Women and the Youth Cup compete in the EWC?

**DK:** "I'm all for it. I think it's right that they've come to race with us but we need to remember that this is a world championship and a standard needs to be kept to. Riders in E1, E2 and E3 shouldn't be handicapped because of the lesser classes. Like I said, they need to leave the special tests as they are but add in deviations for those that don't want to try the harder stuff. That way everyone gets a fair race."

"In the Women's class, Laia Sanz is raising the standard. Granted she's a world-class trials rider but she's worked hard to get faster on the cross tests and now she's as quick as anyone. I think everybody, including some of the men, could follow her example and work on their weak points."

**DBR:** Next season will see a big change for you as you're stepping away from a factory-supported KTM ride and establishing your own team. Is it a move you're looking forward to making?

**DK:** "Yes, but I'm both excited and nervous about it. In 2010 I did a similar thing when I rode with Kawasaki and it was an experience I thoroughly enjoyed. Taking a standard bike and winning the final round of the championship in France is one of my all time career highlights."

"In total that bike cost about £7000 to build and we won on it. Back then I would have liked to continue that project for the following season and I believe we could have done something special but KTM also offered me a factory ride. I'll admit that going back to KTM was the easier option but I knew I could win my third EWC title if I took the offer so that's what I did. Now I've got three titles I feel ready to try things on my own. I'm looking forward to the challenge and doing what I feel is right and trying to win on something I've created." >>



## DK ON...

### DEVELOPMENT

"In the future I'd like to be involved with developing a bike. I've always had a good feeling for setting a bike up and knowing what works and what doesn't. For 2013 I did have a couple of options to do that but I still feel competitive and want to be racing. In a couple of years it's an avenue I want to explore."

### HEALTH MATTERS!

"I'm finally beginning to feel like I've got my full health back. For the last three I've had a lot of ongoing issues to deal with. Obviously my hip operations were the biggest concern but I've also been struggling with my blood levels. Initially I was told not to worry – that it wasn't a major concern – but now that it's been fixed I can feel a difference. I feel healthier and have a lot more energy."





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**DBR:** When was the team established and how did Honda become involved with the project?

**DK:** "Initially when I began to think about what bike I wanted to ride I looked at numerous different manufactures but deep down I was always comparing them to the Honda. When I spoke with Honda they were very supportive in putting a package together for me to race. Pretty quickly a deal was done and they've agreed to support me with bikes and spares for next season."

"At the moment I'm still talking to other sponsors but already the fundamentals of the team are in place. Once the bikes were sorted I then spoke to Paul Edmondson about becoming involved. He's going to assist in the management side of things and will be at the races to oversee everything while also acting as a mentor. I feel with both of us working together there's a lot of potential to succeed."

**DBR:** What are your initial thoughts on the bike?

**DK:** "I had an idea that the bike would be good because I've ridden the '10 model a lot. But so far I've been positively surprised and my first impression was 'this thing is good – we're on to something here'. We're still in the early stages of testing but I've a good feeling everything is going

to come together the way I want it to."

**DBR:** The SuperEnduro opener in Poland was where you made your international debut aboard the Honda. Were you relieved to finally get your first race on Big Red under your belt?

**DK:** "I was quick in qualifying and in the races which on a 450 I'm really pleased with – smaller bikes suit indoor racing better. I'm still building my confidence on the bike. I knew that a lot of people would want to see where I'm at and how fast I was away from a KTM. But I didn't really feel like I was under any pressure. I went to the race to do my best, but also to enjoy it. I did both and everything worked out well."

**DBR:** If nothing else you showed that you still have the speed to be highly competitive indoors. Did you enjoy the night?

**DK:** "Yes, definitely. There're a few little things that I can improve on but with more time on the bike I know I'll be even more competitive. Finishing on the podium was great but I feel I could have done better. I got caught out a few times which stopped me from getting better results. But my speed is good enough to win and that's what I'm focused on."

**DBR:** This year will see you move away from E3 and into the E2 class of the EWC. What are your thoughts on switching classes?

**DK:** "It doesn't faze me. Competing in E2 is something that I've wanted to do for the last three years and I'm not too worried about moving classes. Honestly, it doesn't really matter what category you ride in because they're all tough but I think E2 will be a more evenly matched class to race in. Everyone rides a four-stroke so nobody will have a big advantage. Obviously Pela Renet will be the guy to beat and I've yet to really race against so I don't know how we'll compare. But based on 2012 the racing was quite close and what's encouraging is that Cristobal Guerrero was in contention to win the championship and I feel I've got the measure of him."

**DBR:** Do you still believe you can be a world champion again?

**DK:** "Yes, I believe that I'm capable of winning. If I didn't I wouldn't be going to all this effort to compete. I believe I can build a bike and a team that will take me to my fourth world title. I'm not going there just to make up the numbers. I want to race and I want to win!"



## DK ON... THE DAKAR

"The Dakar Rally is a race I've a serious interest in doing. When it was in Africa I wasn't too keen on the idea but now it seems a lot more attractive. Obviously I don't have a clue about the navigation side of things but it's something I'd like to learn. I think with more manufactures like Honda becoming involved it makes the whole idea of going much more realistic. Hopefully in a couple of years I'll get the opportunity to go."







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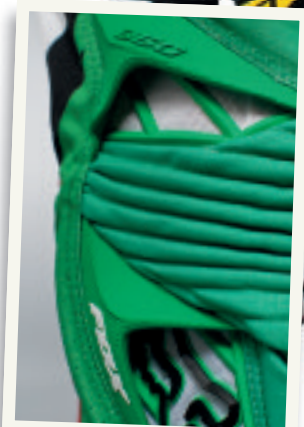
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# BACK TO THE FUTURE!

SOUTH AFRICAN SPEEDSTER NEV BRADSHAW RETURNS TO A FAMILIAR TEAM IN HIS QUEST TO FULFIL A LIFELONG DREAM...

Words and photos by Sam Hobson

**W**hen a browbeaten Neville Bradshaw limped away from Landrake after a disappointing and controversial end to the 2009 racing season he made a life-changing decision that would ultimately see him break away from the DB Racing team that had more or less been formed around him just a few seasons earlier. Three very mixed years on – one of which saw him become so bummed out with motocross he almost quit racing completely – and Bradshaw's back at DB and ready to

pick up where he left off.

Now 29, Bradshaw's considered to be one of the veterans of the British motocross scene and adding to that old man vibe is the fact Nev'll be pushing a pram around the pits in 2013 as his wife Sam is expecting their first young 'un come the end of May. But before all of that excitement there's the small matter of an Arenacross title to defend...

"I really wanna try to keep that title and also the Red Bull Pro Nationals one too," says Nev about his indoor aspirations. "It's gonna be really cool having all of

>>











them together – we have four races in five weeks with just one weekend off in the middle. The series is gonna be sweet, everyone will be with their new teams on their new bikes and all fresh and ready to race. I can't wait!"

With years of experience of racing in the tight UK arenas Nev has to start this series as one of the favourites to win. However, it takes time to accrue that experience and now he's one of the older guys on the gate I wondered if he has to train even harder now to keep up with the younger guys.

"Actually the fitness side of things is getting easier every year," explains Bradshaw. "They say

that with every year you gain 10 per cent on your base fitness. I remember when I was like 17 or 18 years old to do three hours of training a day was just the gnarliest thing, now that's just normal and I don't even get tired. I also recover so much quicker day-to-day and I wake up fresh every morning even after putting some long hours in.

"I'm currently a few weeks into base training and I'm basically just doing a lot of hours – maybe 15-20 hours per week. Then I'll change it up into more intense training as the season approaches. I'm pretty pumped with my fitness though and I've never felt better."

Nev's also very positive about his move back to DB Racing who'll be running under the name of Putoline Honda in 2013.

"I'm pumped to be back with DB. I look back on it and I'll be honest I think one of the biggest mistakes I ever made was leaving those guys in '09. The way they run the team is awesome and they're not into all the flash – the bikes are awesome and all they do is provide the best they can and they'll bend over backwards to keep you happy. I'm really looking forward to getting back to that – a nice small team who are really keen to win races. That's the way I like it."

Excited about returning to his old team and





**Nev Bradshaw's been a solid performer in the Maxxis all year**

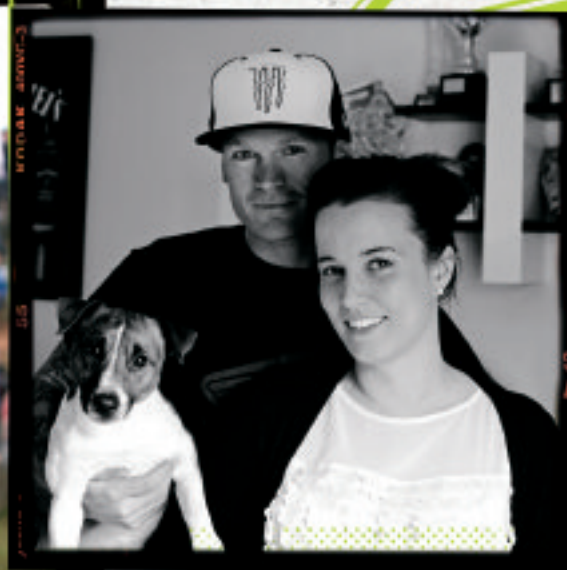
with training going well Nev seems more determined than ever to achieve his goals for the coming year.

"The one thing that's missing off my CV is the main British championship title. I've won the Red Bull, the British Masters, a supercross title and now I really want to have a go at winning the Maxxis – I think I'm in a good place to do that. But more importantly I want to have fun at the races again – I want to look forward to going to the races and to really enjoy my riding. One of my biggest goals is always to ride to the best of my ability, to come away and be pumped with what I've done. It's also important to me just to

gel and work well with the people around me. I want to have a fun season that I can look back and think that was a really cool year."

Away from racing Nev is looking forward to what will undoubtedly be the biggest thing to happen in his life so far. But how does he see the arrival of a baby affecting his training, racing and home life?

"I don't know. I do know I'm really excited about it though and I think that if you're happy within yourself then everything around you is gonna be good too. To be honest we've been trying for this kid for so long now and for it to finally happen I have such a good feeling >>



## WAG WATCH!

QUESTION TIME WITH SAMANTHA BRADSHAW....

**DBR:** What's more sexy speed or style? And which one does Nev have?

**SB:** "[With Nev in background saying 'both' repeatedly] I'd say style. I think that gets your attention and that's how I remember Nev when I first saw him."

**DBR:** What do you think about Nev shaving his legs?

**SB:** "It's a little bit worrying but its fine so long as he doesn't use my razor!"

**DBR:** Can you change an air filter?

**SB:** "No chance! Nev would never let me. He won't even let me clean his goggles – in fact he won't let me anywhere near them. The other day he said 'a woman touching your goggles is like a woman playing with your emotions'."

**DBR:** What bugs you the most about being married to a pro motocross racer?

**SB:** "A lot of people see it as an easy lifestyle – the amount of people that say to me 'when's Nev going to get a real job?'. What they don't see is all the work that goes into it, all the times we have been on holiday and Nev is training every day, even on our honeymoon he was training every day. Christmas day he was out cycling all day!"

"I wish people could live our lives for a few weeks and then come back and say how easy it is! I remember one day when I first started going out with him I had to get up for work and he was still in bed, I said 'you're so lucky, I wish I could be in bed still'. He just said to me, well you go to the gym for five hours today and I'll do your job! I thought, actually you do have a point, I don't think I could do that!"

"Financially, you always have the risk of injury, I don't like to think about it but it is a factor. Especially with family coming up it is a massive risk but it's what Nev has done since he was six years old and I wouldn't have it any other way!"

"The best thing for me is racing every weekend. When you have a weekend off its kinda like 'what do normal people do?'. It's been in my life the whole time and for us it's a way of life. It's always been in my family, my brother races and before that my dad – and I still can't change a filter!"



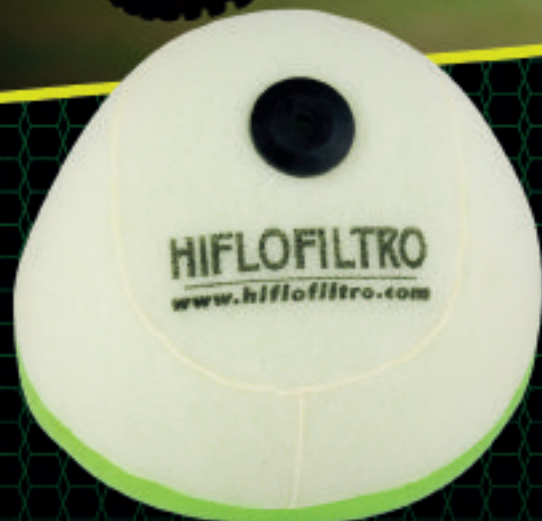
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## MONEY MATTERS!

HOW NEV'S SPONDOOLIES ARE SPREAD, STASHED OR SIMPLY SPENT...

"I get a basic salary then I pick up prize money and bonus money. How I work it is that my salary pays for the bills, mortgage, van and food. Prize money goes towards practicing and funds my racing – that can cost up to £300 per week getting ready for the season. Then I try and save my bonus money. That gets put away and I take money from that if I want something for my bicycle or something like that".



## NEV'S FANTASTIC FIVE!

BRADSHAW ENTERS THE QUICK FIRE ROUND...

**DBR:** Who would you like to meet, given the chance?

**NB:** "Lil Wayne, to see how he lives."

**DBR:** Money or fame?

**NB:** "Fame for sure. I'm not really a money kinda guy."

**DBR:** If you won the lottery what's the first thing you'd do?

**NB:** "Take my wife and two good friends and do an indoor and outdoor season in the US."

**DBR:** Legs. Shave or wax?

**NB:** "I shave my whole body!"

**DBR:** Rhianna, out of 10?

**NB:** "I'd give her one."



## AURAL PLEASURE!

TOP TUNES FOR SPECIAL SITUATIONS...

**Driving:** Lil Wayne – How to Love

**Romancing:** Nelly ft Kelly – Dilemma

**Going out:** Labyrinth – Earthquake

**Chilling:** Sean Paul – Got 2 Luv U

**Pre-race:** Guano Apes – Open Your Eyes

**Guilty pleasure:** Nikki Minaj – Starships

about it! I think that motocross is pretty much my whole life and sometimes it's good to have something that takes my mind off it completely so when I do come back to it I'm a lot keener. Also, now there's no option other than for me to do well. I need to get the prize money and stuff just to support the family. That pressure has always been there but now I just have an extra little thing that I know is depending on me."

While Nev's definitely a glass half-full kinda guy I sensed that he was somewhat jaded about some areas of the motocross industry so I had to ask if he could see himself staying around the sport if he wasn't riding.

"If you asked me that two years ago then I'd have said yes without a doubt but there's so much stuff that happens in this sport that you just get over it after a while. I love riding motorbikes and there's a handful of really good people in the sport who are in it for the

right reasons and really want their riders to do well. Then there are a lot of people who are doing it just to be there..."

"Four years ago motocross was everything and I could never see my life being anything else. I figured I'd race, train kids and get involved with a team or something but the way the finances are and the stress involved I couldn't see myself doing that. I'd like to maybe be a rider coach with a rider who wanted to put the effort in that's needed – I'd like to stay in the sport that way. I've been working quite a bit with James Harrison, he's stuck to my program and the results have been awesome – I really dig that. I like to see kids that really wanna do well, put the work in and achieve their goals. That's quite a fulfilling thing.

"I met Paul Cooper when he was a little older – maybe 33 or 34 –and I started hanging out with him a lot. A lot of his focuses were



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After a steady start to the season Nev dominated the Red Bull Pro Nationals



away from motocross and I thought that was really weird but the older I get the more I realise he had been through all this stuff, had bad things happen with teams and kinda got over the whole scene. Now he's turned his life to something different, he still cycles all the time and is still active and as things stand that's how I could see things being for me in the future....

"Things can change though. If the right opportunity comes about and it's something I believe in then I'll do it but if it's something just to make money then I won't. I never ever want to be one of those guys that will just take a load of money off kids just to run a team because that goes against everything I believe in."

Anything else you wanna get off your chest Nev?

"I love the way the Red Bull and Maxxis series are bringing the kids into it because I think it's good for them to learn from the pro riders. Also the prize money is much better

than it used to be but the fact that you need to be in a team to race in the British Championship sucks because it used to be the top 60 guys in the country would get the chance to qualify on the day. Also, I don't like how a lot of the young kids are paying into teams and getting rides over those who should be getting the places on merit

"I think it's going to get worse before it gets better too. Every year there are fewer and fewer riders making a living at it. It puts so much pressure on because you have to be doing well every single weekend to make the ends meet. That's why I'm working so hard at the minute. For a young kid who's chasing a dream like I did coming from South Africa... I don't see any chance for them to make it now. It used to be that if you finished top 10 in the Maxxis you would get a free ride on a team for the next year. It's sad that it's turned out the way it has but that's the way the economy is I guess."



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# COMMENT

**S**ince Dirt Bike Rider first hit newsagents' shelves in the summer of 1981 there have been six British off-road world champions crowned – that's Neil Hudson, Dave Thorpe, Paul Edmondson, Dougie Lampkin, Jamie Dobb and David Knight. Amazingly in those 31 and a bit years that speedy six amassed a massive 23 titles between them although to be fair it was the slowest of the lot – that's Lampkin – who took the lion's share!

Nevertheless we feel that all six deserve an equal amount of recognition and what better way to celebrate their all-round awesomeness than inventing time travel and zooming back through history to a very special day in each of their careers.

To facilitate this fantasy we've enlisted the help of Morecambe's #1 time travel agent Doctor Ivana and her trusty sidekick – Time Dog. We knew we were on to a winner with Ivana when The Bear sneaked a speedy glance at her cleavage and four hours passed by before he knew it – and that was without the use of a Continuum Transfunctioner, Flux Capacitor or a Hot Tub with a can of Chernobly Energy Drink tipped into its control panel...

To start our journey we head back to 1981 to a time when factory Yamaha's Neil Hudson is embroiled in a battle for the 250cc world championship with dirty riding defending champ Georges Jobe. The history books show us that Nellie comes out on top but how does he do it?

From there Ivana takes us straight to Farleigh Castle for the 1985cc British 500cc Grand Prix. Dave Thorpe comes to the Wiltshire circuit holding a 15 point lead in the championship over arch nemesis Andre Malherbe and extends that by three as he wins the opening gambit. However, Thorpey's world is turned upside down in race two but his comeback is astonishing – read all about it right here!

Nine years later and it's Dougie Lampkin's time to shine as he battles for his first ever world trial win. Can the Yorkshireman defeat the world's best feet-up stars in t'other rose county or will victory #1 have to wait for another time?

By the summer of 1996 Paul Edmondson is already a three-time enduro world champion and he's on the brink of winning his first over-175cc title on a pre-production Gas Gas. Trouble is that 250 Gasser is far

from reliable and defending champ Giovanni Sala is charging hard as the season comes to a close in Germany! Ivana and Time Dog drop us there to catch all the action...

The DBR Time Machine spits us out in Belgium next and the infamous Namur circuit where we see Jamie Dobb overcome adversity as he takes one step closer to becoming 2001 125cc world champion.

Our sixth and final stop is 2005 and Serres in Greece where Manx man mountain David Knight is on the verge of clinching his maiden enduro world championship. Will he pull it off here or will it be a Greek tragedy which means he'll have to head to the season finale in Bergamo to seal the deal?

Doctor Ivana will be with you on your journey every step of the way to hold your hand and offer up additional insight into the careers of our champions. Basically, you can think of her as a much less annoying version of Doc Emmet Brown or Sam out of Quantum Leap, say. So hold on tight and let the DBR Time Machine take you on a magical mystery tour of the last 30-odd years of British off-road glory...







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After Nellie stopped racing in 1986 he set up a motorcycle repair business in his native Somerset before moving up to Thornbury with second wife Suzanne into a smallholding with her widowed Mum. After travelling the country as an electrician for a year rewiring Tesco supermarkets Nellie converted some outbuildings into a workshop and started his business up again. It flourished until wrecked by the foot and mouth outbreak in 2000.

After building for a year he did a bit of driving. A guy he knew worked at UPS couriers so he went for an interview in 2003 and they were so impressed that Nellie had always maintained his own race trucks he came away as a mechanic! Hudson now runs their Avonmouth and Cardiff operations.

Having enjoyed travelling abroad to twinshock MX meetings with old foe Graham Noyce and Vets MX des organiser Dave King, Nellie retired for good after riding a 1988 YZM500 Yamaha at the 2010 Farleigh classic.

Of his five children and step-children, three have raced, the youngest, Elizabeth, an AMCA schoolgirl champion but now, like her Mum, into horses and showjumping! 55 year-old Hudson and younger brother Gary (who worked for Yamaha for 25 years) still do the annual Telford classic show where last February he was both thrilled and nervous to meet up once more with his former mentor and team boss Heikki Mikkola.



## ROOKIE TERROR!

**Jury duty turns out to be troublesome for first-timer Dave Nicoll . . .**

Former 500GP winner and British MX des Nations team manager Dave Nicoll suffered a torrid baptism of fire at Apeldoorn where he made his debut as ACU representative on the FIM jury. After the second moto, as the Yamaha camp celebrated, Georges Jobe and his team boss Johnny Stribos lodged a protest claiming that Neil Hudson had received outside assistance when he fell in the woods on the second lap. Poor Nicoll had to chair a heated jury meeting that lasted over an hour before the protest was flung out and Hudson officially declared 1981 World 250 Champion!





# DUTCH DELIGHT!



NEIL HUDSON NAILS DOWN THE 250 WORLD TITLE AS THE QUARTER LITRE CHAMPIONSHIP CHASE COMES TO A CLOSE IN HOLLAND...

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY JACK BURNICLE

**Y**amaha's quiet West Countryman Neil Hudson and reigning 250cc world motocross champion Georges Jobe (Suzuki) have been constantly locking horns this summer in a sequence of scalding grand prix duels – well, they were until Georges hurt himself...

Hudson takes full advantage and crosses the Atlantic two weeks early to acclimatize for the US GP at Unadilla, renting a lakeside house, visiting mechanic Bill Buchka's imposing residence in the Rocky Mountains, training, testing and hiring a motorhome – which he and wife Dawn kindly allow me to stay in over race weekend in exchange for my rental car!

Second to Honda America's Donnie Hansen in race one, Hudson hurtles thrillingly through the pack and almost catches Hansen's team-mate Steve Wise in a damp, drizzly second moto to claim overall victory – the first European to conquer the Unadilla grand prix!

Overcome with blubbing excitement, I stand trackside on the final momentous lap as the 'Hill People' cheer Wise to the flag, turning on them I point to Hudson and scream 'what about him then?!' I don't quite know where that features in the photojournalist's handbook!

Russia next and Jobe dislocates his left elbow in practice and 'Nellie' wins both races. Heavily strapped, Georges shows up to defend an 11 point title lead in the energy-sapping sand of Apeldoorn, central Holland. Hudson, off a poor start, rides nervously and only salvages fourth and a meagre eight points in the first moto as Jobe fades out of contention.

So Hudson still trails by three points as they line up for race two. He needs seventh place or better if Georges once more fails to finish. The electrifying tension rises as Jobe argues with officials after being allowed on to the front row of the starting grid by a helpful compatriot. He capitalises with a top five start but behind him there's absolute pandemonium.

Hudson lies buried beneath a massive first turn pile-up along with team-mate Dave Watson.

Last to rise, his handlebars bent and twistgrip so choked with sand it will scarcely turn, Hudson scrambles back on board the Yamaha already dead last. Then he falls, reappearing after an agonising delay, fully half a minute behind the next man. I catch the eye of KTM boss Calman Cseh and we both simultaneously shake our heads – it looks like Nellie's challenge is over.

But there are men of greater faith. Nellie's great UK rival Graham Noyce – who narrowly lost the 500 world title one week earlier – grabs a signalling board discarded by one of Jobe's crew and leans out over the track tapping his temple. "He just has to use his head and not panic," yells 'Rolls' Noyce, typically clad in flip-flops. "There's a long way to go!"

An inspired Hudson closes rapidly on the pack and begins eating up places at the rate of four a lap, thankfully avoiding Watson as his Yamaha kicks sideways on one of the choppy straights pitching David off. He's briefly impeded by a desperate Jobe who's fallen and waited to remount in Nellie's path. Twice he shows Hudson the trackside trees, forcing him to brake heavily but once Neil escapes Georges retired and the crowd – roused by the circuit commentary – roar the Englishman on.

Trackside the British contingent, headed by team manager Heikki Mikkola, mechanic Buchka and pals Rob Hooper and Stephen Russell (both retired from the race) alternately holler themselves hoarse then hold their collective breath while Nellie is out of sight, rampaging through the woodlands. By lap nine he's reached 11th (points are awarded to tenth) and two laps later he bursts through to eighth.

With just one more place required Hudson can see fast Swede Sven Berggren up ahead. The gap gradually closes until, three laps later, a massive cheer greets Nellie as he erupts alone into the arena – leading the title chase by a single point! He then sweeps imperiously past Jan de Groot's sandfly Dinant Zijlstra for good measure to nail a safer sixth before crossing the line to be first sprayed by Mikkola's bubbly then submerged beneath scores of frenzied fans – the 1981 250 world champion!



# BATTLE OF BRITAIN!

IT'S HONOURS EVEN AS THORPE AND MALHERBE SHARE WINS  
IN A SUPREME SCRAP TO THE FINISH AT FARLEIGH CASTLE...

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY JACK BURNICLE



**T**he pressure is on Dave Thorpe as he reaches Farleigh Castle for the 1985 British 500GP holding a tenuous 15 point lead in the world championship over reigning champion and Honda team-mate Andre Malherbe. "Nervous? I was so wound up before the start of the first race I could have cried," confesses the Englishman.

A hard-fought first race victory over the suave Belgian eases those butterflies and fulfils the expectations of 25,000 avid fans but it all goes horribly wrong at the start of race two...

Beneath glowering Wiltshire skies – after a brief rain shower has dampened the already evil track – Leif Persson holeshots then low-sides entering the tight first turn. Malherbe squeezes through but Thorpe is forced wide by a (literally) 'Swervin' Mervyn Anstie and their two Hondas end up in a heap against the fence.

Thorpe springs back aboard and, his bike undamaged, restarts second last and begins the charge of a lifetime, hollering and elbowing his way through the pack in a quite incredible display of bloody-minded determination. Half-way round the second lap he's overtaken 30 rivals and reached eighth place – just 12 seconds behind early leader Dave Watson and his Kawasaki!

Crossing the line and broadsiding beneath the 'DBR' bridge, he's sixth. And eight explosive minutes into the moto, surging through the trees on the far side of the circuit, he reaches fourth, only three seconds behind Malherbe! "The crowd were fantastic," says Thorpe later. "When I was coming through clutching and revving it down the hill and banging through other riders seeing them waving was a big plus – I just wanted to

do it for them..."

Andre responds, scooping up Watson, but Thorpe also flies past the Kawasaki as they launch over the big hilltop. Starting the fourth lap he's right in his team-mate's wheeltracks and with just eleven minutes and 49 seconds on the clock a sudden uproar from the far reaches of the woods tell us the home hero has, incredibly, grabbed the lead!

Plunging back downhill into the valley complex the Hondas are side-by-side, Malherbe almost nicking the advantage back into the rough right-hander at the bottom of the fast, bumpy hill. A determined Thorpe prevails, and even opens up a two-second lead over the wily three-time champion. Then on lap eight a stupid spectator runs across the track in front of Thorpe as he plummets down the hill and two tense laps later Malherbe retakes the lead.

But on his penultimate circuit the Belgian hits a load of trouble along the veranda and suddenly they're neck-and-neck again! Last lap and David briefly hits the front. Malherbe instantly reacts, leaving Thorpe to attempt a last lunge into the final hairpin bend nearly losing the front and allowing Malherbe a clear sprint to the finishing line...

What a race! The Belgian takes the overall verdict on a tie-breaker – that second race result the decider – and it's nearly two minutes before third-placed Georges Jobe takes the chequered flag. Had Thorpe done too much too soon and burned himself out? "I'd do the same again," he insists. "I knew I just had to get up to Andre as quickly as I could. If I'd hung back and waited he'd have escaped. But in the end perhaps his mind was working quicker than mine!"





David Keith Thorpe retired from racing at the end of 1993 having won the 500 world championship in 1985, 1986 and 1989 each time with Honda. He then – as team manager – led Great Britain to an historic MX des Nations triumph over the invincible Americans at Roggenburg, Switzerland in 1994 breaking the Yanks' 13 year reign.

Thorpe went on to manage race teams for Honda, winning the national 125 title and twice achieving top three in the world with Mike Brown. He later became race director at CCM but is now back at Honda where he has set up the Dave Thorpe Off-Road Centre in South Wales. He also manages the Buildbase Honda squad – his rider Nico Aubin winning the MX1 Red Bull Pro National championship in 2012.

Born in south London but based in Berkshire throughout his racing life David now lives in deepest Devon with second wife Gail. They have a small daughter (to add to his grown-up sons Lewis and Ryan) and run motocross training schools countrywide.



## FARLEIGH FLASHBACK!

*It's history repeating for Thorpe in his tie-breaker heart-breaker . . .*

*This isn't the first time Dave Thorpe has emerged second-best on a tie-breaker at Farleigh Castle. In 1982, as a raw teenager in his first full 500 grand prix season with Alec Wright's Team Green Kawasaki on the factory KX420 he single-handedly faced the combined might of Honda, Yamaha and Suzuki's works team. After reigning champion Malherbe had broken his leg at Carlsbad, the world title was being hotly disputed by Suzuki duo Brad Lackey and Andre Vromans. Thorpe calmly thrashed*

*them all in the first moto with Vromans edging Lackey for second place.*

*But the Suzukis overwhelmed the lone Kawasaki in race two. Lackey this time victorious as Thorpe, third, led home Brits Neil Hudson and Graham Noyce. This meant Thorpe and Lackey were tied on 25 points apiece. At first we all thought the overall winner would be decided on faster race time which gave Thorpe the verdict but instead it was done on second race results and Dave lost out to the bearded Californian.*







After winning at Hoghton Towers Dougie Lampkin went on to win 98 more world trials rounds falling just one short of the magic century! He equalled Jordi Tarres' record of seven outdoor world titles and also triumphed five times indoors. Already making a name for himself in the world of extreme enduro and now a married man with two sons, Doug announced his retirement from world trials at the end of the 2012 season.

## DOUGIE'S DISTRACTION!

The podium topper's Hoghton heart stopper...

During the Blitz Dougie Lampkin's grandad, engineer Arthur Alan Lampkin, had loaded his wife and two kids into a sidecar outfit, left Shooters Hill, south-east London and headed north up the A1 to settled in Silsden, North Yorkshire. His three sons Arthur, Alan and Martin all became international off-road stars and now the latest family prodigy, 18 year-old Douglas Charles, was on the verge of a major breakthrough.

But on day one of the trial at Hoghton Towers 80 year old Grandad Lampkin suffered a heart attack. Martin was distressed to hear the news after the event's conclusion. "That's put a dampener on things," muttered the 1975 world champion as thick banks of cloud rolled in from the Irish Sea, engulfing the place in an eerie yellow light. Thunder and forked lightning shattered the stormy sky and huge hailstones raged down, God's wrath announcing the arrival of Dougie Lampkin on to the world scene. And thankfully, five days later, Grandad was out of intensive care and in good spirits, doubtless bolstered by the success of the latest in his astonishing line of motorcycling wizards!





# LANCASHIRE HOTPOT!

DOUGIE KEEPS THE LAMPKIN LEGACY ALIVE WITH A MUDDY  
MAIDEN WORLD TRIAL WIN AT HOGHTON TOWERS...

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY JACK BURNICLE



**T**he de Hoghton family had owned land in the Pendle Hills of Lancashire since the days of William the Conqueror before Thomas Hoghton built Hoghton Towers in 1565. King James the First banqueted there in 1617 and was so impressed with the loin of beef proffered that he promptly took his sword and knighted it 'Sir Loin'!

Sir Bernard Hoghton – the 14th Baronet – was also patron of the north-west centre of the ACU and so it came to pass that in 1991 Hoghton Towers hosted the British round of the world trials championship. It was won by Italian Diego Bosis, which must have delighted Sir Bernard's wife Rosanne Buratti, who's from Florence!

Three years later the event returns with 12 sections contained in a fabulous four-mile lap that encircles the fortified hilltop mansion outside Blackburn on a wild and windy spring weekend. Six months earlier – despite riding the final round with a broken wrist – Dougie Lampkin had clinched the European trials championship and on the first day at Hoghton Towers finished second behind 1991 winner Bosis.

To avoid the first day queues the early sections are shortened for Sunday but by the time the field reaches the peaty, rock-strewn climb up from the banks of the River Darwen for section six defending champion Jordi Tarres had already fived section three.

And the usually unflappable Spaniard fails again at six falling backwards down the river bank! Amos Bilbao magics a single dab out of potential disaster and Marc Colomer, who had cleaned the first five sections, also drops one.

Then Lampkin, to deafening cheers from the massed ranks of spectators, conjures up the only clean of the whole weekend. By the time

they reach the technical rockery of section 11, nestling deep beneath the trees alongside the Blackburn to Liverpool railway line, Lampkin and Colomer have lost only three apiece while poor Bosis has shed an unlucky 13 – so across the two days Lampkin leads!

Colomer gets desperately out of shape crossing the trench between two huge rocks but typically pulls off an astonishing escape with a dab. Lampkin also shoots out a steady foot and his brilliant lap of five puts him firmly in overall control with danger man Colomer third behind Joan Pons. But time's tight as they start lap two.

The deep, dark quarry engulfing sections nine and 10 drops riders steeply into its murky depths, alongside a sheer cliff face, and out via a narrow, full-bore blind. Tarres, trailing in fifth place, cleans the lot as Lampkin dabs twice and Colomer sheds three. Back at base, on the grassy slopes alongside the manor, nestles a natural rocky amphitheatre forming the final section 12 that's surrounded by hundreds of fans eager to cheer Lampkin home.

But Dougie strays badly off line hitting the last huge vertical rock step. Jammed on the lip, rear wheel spinning sideways and time rapidly running out, there's nowhere for the Beta to go. "Take five!" bellows his father Martin. Poor Dougie, convinced he's blown it, slumps dejectedly while his card is punched.

Then, agonising moments later, a mighty roar rises from the finishing marquee as his scores are posted alongside those of Colomer and Tarres. The upstart Englishman triumphs by six marks to record his first world trial win and hoist himself up to third in the championship table. A vast happy crowd throng section 12 for the trophy presentation and urge Lampkin to try that rock step once more and Dougie duly obliged and cleans it this time to a blast of approval.





# BURGER KING!

A STEADY RIDE IN BURG SEES PAUL EDDY ADD WORLD TITLE  
#4 TO THE TALLY...

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY JACK BURNICLE

**P**aul Edmondson's no stranger to world championship glory having already won 125 crowns with KTM, Husqvarna and Gas Gas but a pair of steady rides in Burg, near Magdeburg, Germany see the 27 year-old Midlander become the first rider in history to win both 125cc and Open class enduro world titles. He rates this latest success with Gas Gas as the most memorable.

"Keeping the pre-production 250 two-stroke going all year has been a pretty interesting project," smiles the man who's more commonly known as 'Fast Eddy'. "The bike, performance wise, is incredible but as rider, mechanic and manufacturer we've had constant teething problems!"

The championship chase goes right down to the final round in a showdown with fabled Italian Giovanni Sala. "The going was sandy," says Edmondson. "I like sand! I grew up riding motocross bikes with Jamie Dobb and Paul Malin at the Desert (a fabled Midlands practice venue) or at Dobber's sand track which he's packed with crazy double jumps!"

"The Shirts junior and senior are very passionate about enduros and have been instrumental in getting me a Gas Gas deal. Shirty junior came over to Germany, as did my brother Derrick. I had an issue with blown head gaskets. Then we had a brainwave – use a high pressure radiator cap. We thought that might help the problem. We knew the KTMs had higher pressure radiator caps than ours, so Shirty, Derrick and my mechanic Julian Stevens were all running around pinching them. Several KTMs were missing radiator caps. We took them on a short-term loan, except they were never replaced!"

"There's already a war on between KTM and Gas Gas. It's a war of teams as well as riders. We don't trust the Italians as far as we can throw them. My Gas Gas mechanic Boni is one of those Spaniards who'll cruise round, helmet chin piece lowered, fag hanging out, with an old haversack and bum bag and not a care in the world! We had him riding round the edge of the special tests following Gio to check he wasn't taking any short cuts through the tapes.

"And Farioli sent the old KTM army after me because they knew we had an issue with the bike and it could have stopped at any time. It was all very political but good fun! I just had to bring it home on day two but when your head gasket is leaking and you can see coolant seeping out and they're topping it up at every checkpoint – I'd never ridden a bike so delicately all my life."

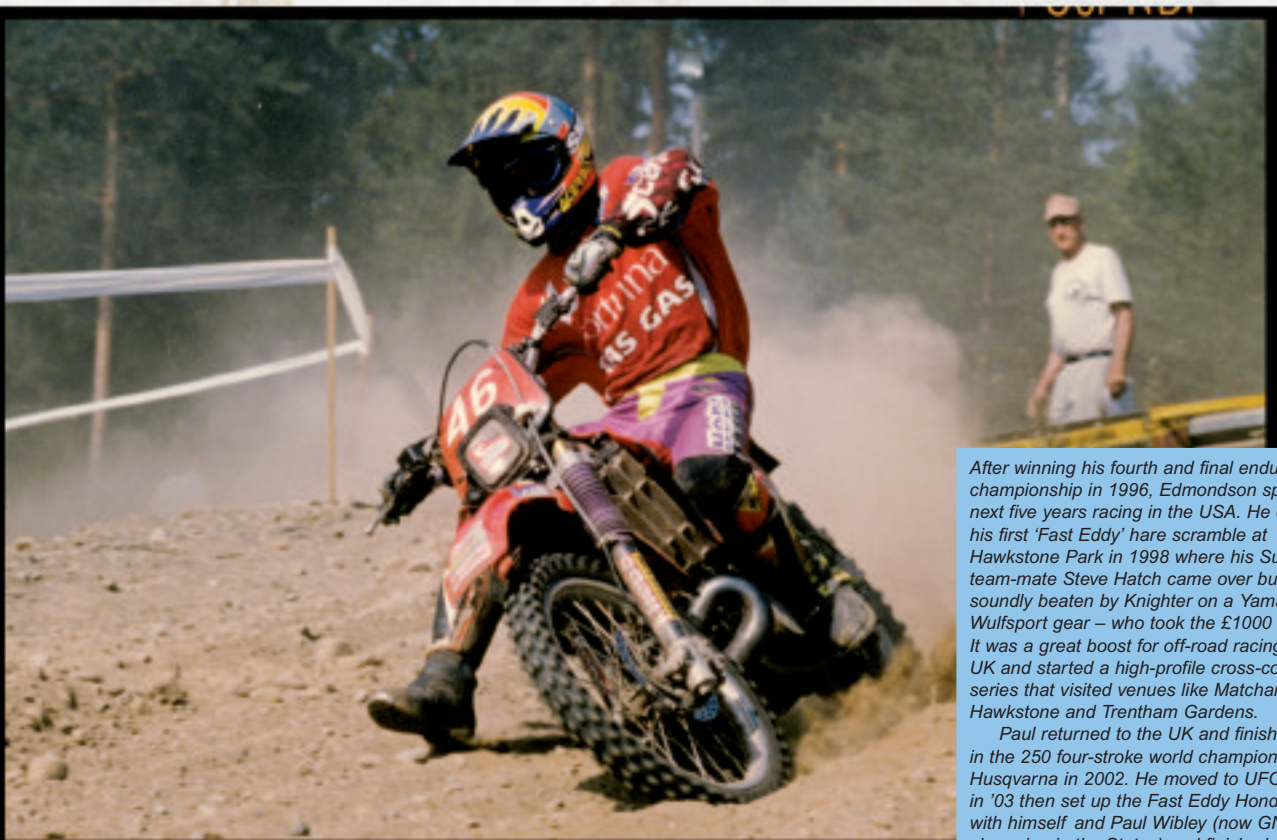
## MR SMOOTH!

Fast Eddy's right-hand man –  
Julian Stevens...

*Paul Edmondson's mechanic Julian Stevens first worked with Little Ed when he won his maiden world title in 1990 and now six years on he's back again...*

*"Julian is one of the few mechanics who lasted a couple of years with Mervyn Anstie," grins Paul. "He comes from Kendal in Cumbria and is passionate about enduro. We first met when he came to the Natterjack in 1989. I was riding for Farioli. Then for 1990 I got a deal direct with the KTM factory and needed to find my own mechanic so I did a deal with him – one of the best moves I ever made. He's a fantastic mechanic and a real grafter. We won the 125 title then parted company but he came back – unfortunately for him! This has probably been the hardest year he's ever had because we contested the Spanish, British and World championships and we've won all three."*





After winning his fourth and final enduro world championship in 1996, Edmondson spent the next five years racing in the USA. He organised his first 'Fast Eddy' hare scramble at Hawkstone Park in 1998 where his Suzuki US team-mate Steve Hatch came over but got soundly beaten by Knighter on a Yamaha – in Wulfsport gear – who took the £1000 first prize. It was a great boost for off-road racing in the UK and started a high-profile cross-country series that visited venues like Matchams Park, Hawkstone and Trentham Gardens.

Paul returned to the UK and finished second in the 250 four-stroke world championship for Husqvarna in 2002. He moved to UFO Yamaha in '03 then set up the Fast Eddy Honda team with himself and Paul Wibley (now GNCC champion in the States) and finished second in the world again in 2004, this time behind Finnish legend Juha Salminen. Since then he's been promoting events, having occasional outings and riding the British championships although he himself hasn't a clue how many he's won!

For 2013 Edmondson is back with Honda, managing and running a team for David Knight. He lives on a five-acre smallholding at Shenstone, outside Lichfield, with wife Mandy and sons Jack and Harry. And yes, they're both pretty handy on motorcycles!







After another week of recovery Dobb would win one more Grand Prix at Roggenburg in Switzerland – his seventh and final success of 2001. A fourth place at round 11 confirmed his place in the history books though and believe it or not Dobb is still the UK's last motocross world champion.

2001 was the last of five years for Dobb on the 125cc two-strokes and the category would only exist for another two editions. An ill-fated move onto KTM's new 250cc project in 2002 almost yielded a victory in Germany but frustration with the competitive package of the 250SX meant Dobb wore the number one plate in a 125cc wild-card outing in Austria and won for KTM at their home event and celebrated what would be the last of his 14 Grand Prix victories.

Another 250cc term with KTM in 2003 showed signs of improvement when the 450SX-F four-stroke was introduced and Dobb was given the equipment in the second half of the season. A crash at Lierop led to a dislocated shoulder and he would leave the confines of KTM after four years as a works rider.

Dobb re-entered the MX2 class at the age of 32 in 2004 but was beginning to focus more on his sports management business and to-date has assisted the likes of Tommy Searle, various footballers and other athletes with their careers. Dobb was also instrumental in the establishment of American drinks giant Monster Energy into the European racing scene.

He currently lives in Derby – close to Donington Park – has two children with wife Naomi and is active in numerous charity initiatives including the Make a Wish foundation.



## RACE ROUND-UP...

Quarter and half litre action from the Citadel...

Namur sees L+M Yamaha's Stefan Everts finally notch up his 50th GP victory equalling six-time world champ Joel Robert's long standing record in the process. Everts makes it happen by yanking the holey and then leaving them for dead with neither Marnicq Bervoets nor reigning champ Joel Smets able to reel him back in. The three make it an all Belgium podium in the 500cc class.

In the 250 division Mickael Pichon sprays the champagne for the seventh time this season as he finishes the points-payer ahead of Chad Reed and Pit Beirer. It's a disappointing day for the Brits though as crashes keep Motorex Husqvarna's Carl Nunn and Embo's Paul Cooper out of the points. Frustrated Ulsterman Gordon Crockard finally steers his CAS Honda to sixth after nearly getting mown down by an out of control Justin Morris on the opening lap.





# RAIN MAN!

JAMIE DOBB WELCOMES A DOWNPOUR AT NAMUR WHERE DESPITE SUFFERING WITH A DUFF SHOULDER HE EXTENDS HIS 125CC WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP LEAD...

WORDS BY ADAM WHEELER PHOTOS BY ALEX HODGKINSON



It's been a tough month for Jamie Dobb and he must have thought the racing gods were against him but the 29-year-old factory KTM rider finally catches a break at Namur – it starts to rain... With all three classes (500cc, 250cc and 125cc) of the FIM Motocross World Championship now nicely settled together the series itself is still coming to terms with the new one moto

format introduced by fresh rights-holders Dorna. Dobb – runner-up in the series to Grant Langston in 2000 – has been in ferocious form, picking up five wins with the powerful 125SX but then came a qualification crash in Sweden and a broken right collarbone. Dobb recovered in time to gain a podium in France (thanks to a swift operation and installation of a plate) but was again looking glum as a separated left shoulder due to a training accident a week before the trip to Belgium means that his title hopes are less certain.

The enduro-esque nature of the long and winding Namur course is entertaining the 125 machines for the first time at round nine of 14 and through pleasant conditions on Saturday Dobb pushes his battered torso over the tree roots and whoops to take second in qualifying behind main title rival Erik Eggen. With six races left it's important that the racer – trained by Kirk Gibbons and guided by Kurt Nicoll – keeps his hand in the championship chase and wards Eggen and a young Steve Ramon away from his 64 point lead in the standings.

On Saturday evening – with his left limb heavily strapped – Dobb acknowledges that he's struggling around the fast and dangerous circuit but the overcast skies duly unload and the slippery and muddy conditions lower the speed, roughen the park dirt and make Sunday's 35 minute moto a much easier prospect.

The next day Dobb claims his sixth win of the season. The adversity when paired with the result must mark the race as one of the highlights of his turbulent career. The start gives no indication that Dobb is capable of such a performance as it's Marc De Reuver who leads the field on his Yamaha as the screaming pack dips down into the trees for the first time. Eggen is quickly out of the picture with the fall of several crashes.

Dobb takes his time to establish a rhythm but

once he pushes past Alex Puzar for second he has the onus to reel in De Reuver. By lap five he's slashed the rookie's margin from five seconds to two and another two circulations later he gains first position after an exemplary display of control and determination.

De Reuver starts to make mistakes and it's Ramon and an excitable Puzar – on the Husqvarna – who end up fighting over second place. Ramon pleases the locals and leapfrogs Eggen in the championship standings by earning the runner-up spot on the podium as Puzar survives a pant-soiling moment through the trees to take third.

Dobb has a cushion of almost 10 seconds by the finish and after entering the paddock on Friday hopeful of scoring a few points leaves Belgium exhilarated by his outing and by extending his window at the top of the 125cc tree from 64 to 78 points with five races remaining.

"I went to see a Doctor after my training crash and he said I couldn't have an operation on my shoulder because there was nothing to bolt anything to! So I stayed positive and did as little as I could, focussing my training in other areas," says Jamie. "I knew I would have a chance if I remained positive. When it started to rain I had a great opportunity because the track became more technical. Yesterday it was very fast whereas when it's wet you have to think a lot more so that was better for me."

"When I am in a position on the bike the ligament damage doesn't bother me at all. When the bike does something strange, like through the whoops, when I have to really extend the arm, then I notice it but it wasn't that bad and when I was out there racing I could just ignore any discomfort. The main thing was that the shoulder was a bit weak from doing nothing for 10 days so Saturday was tough in that respect."

Dobb has a special message for the groups of Union Jack bearers around the course. The UK fans sensing that the KTM man is on the edge of a memorable campaign – one in which Britain does not get to entertain a round of the series. "The British fans are amazing here today and this is the closest I will probably get to a home GP this year. I had to win it for all of those who made the trip across and helped me on with their great support."



# GREEK GOD!

KNIGHTER WRAPS UP HIS FIRST EVER WORLD ENDURO TITLE  
AT THE PENULTIMATE ROUND OF THE WEC IN SERRES...

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY JONTY EDMUNDS

**D**avid Knight finally lifts his first ever world enduro championship title after claiming a double Enduro 3 class win at the penultimate round of the series in Greece. The dominant rider in the E3 class all year Knight wins both days in Serres to secure the crown in the best possible way.

After finishing close to one minute ahead of his nearest rival on day one David then wins by 48 seconds on day two. Stopping close to the end of the final test of the event to wave to the enthusiastic Greek spectators, Knight is then mobbed by his KTM team as he exits the test.

"Winning a world title is something I've wanted to do ever since I was a child," explains Knight. "I knew that if I rode like I have at all the other rounds of the series I would win the title here and that is exactly what I have done. It feels great to have won the world title."

In winning his first ever world title the Manx enduro ace stamped his mark on the international enduro scene in no uncertain terms. The fastest rider in the Enduro 3 class on all but one of the 18 days of the nine-round championship Knight's speed and consistency also saw him finish as the fastest overall competitor in more WEC events than not.

Few were expecting the Manxman to be as dominant as he was Knight showed that 2005 was unquestionably his year. Topping the E3 class on both days in Spain, Portugal, Italy the Czech Republic and France he soon opened up a commanding championship lead.

"The way the championship started for me was perfect," admits Knighter looking back to the season opener. "It was wet, which suited me and everything went well. I wasn't expecting to win by as much as I did but I knew then that I could win the world championship. When I won it Portugal the following weekend where it was dry I knew that it would be hard for the other E3 class riders to beat me."

David did get beaten once during the year though – in Finland by his team-mate Marko Tarkkala. "I knew that if Marko was going to beat me anywhere this season it was going to be at his home race in Finland. To be honest I wasn't too bothered that he beat me because it took a little pressure off me. I knew he would be fast, tried a little too hard and made a few mistakes. I settled down on day two and beat him and have been the fastest rider at each of the rounds since then. It would have been nice to have won every day but winning the championship is the important thing."







In 2006 Knighter defended his Enduro 3 title in style becoming a worthy two-time champion. He then headed for the States and the US GNCC series. KTM team-mate Juha Salminen had already destroyed our US friends in the style of racing they do best and DK continued to show that 'Euros' can race through trees better than any other riders on the planet by securing the 2007 and 2008 GNCC titles.

2009 was a disastrous year for the Manxman. A double WEC and double US GNCC title winner, DK signed for BMW along with Salminen and good very quickly went bad. Very bad. So bad in fact that DK parted company with the German manufacturer and finished the season on a privateer Kawasaki.

KTM took David back cautiously in 2010 and while he received factory support he wasn't officially named as a factory rider. Long story short, he claimed a third Enduro 3 title but then saw 2011 ruined by injury – a double hip operation to be exact.

In 2012 things didn't go well as more injuries and 'issues' with KTM resulted in a largely disappointing international season. Knighter did secure a 10th overall BEC crown though and announced his plans to race for Honda in 2013 soon after.



## CLEAN SWEEP!

**KTM claims all three crowns under cloudless Greek skies...**

Spain's Ivan Cervantes is the first rider to claim a WEC title in 2005 when he tops the Enduro 1 class on day one in Greece. Finishing ahead of Yamaha rider Bartosz Oblucki and his KTM team-mate Alessandro Belometti, Cervantes also becomes Spain's first ever World Enduro Champion.

"It's an amazing feeling knowing that I am the first ever Spaniard to win a WEC title," admits Ivan. "It has been such a great season for me. Riding in a different class to last year, on a new bike and winning so many races is incredible."

With his world title secure Cervantes ups the pace even further on day two and places over a minute ahead of Belometti who's just six seconds ahead of Oblucki as they trade positions from the day before.

With Finn Samuli Aro only needing to finish with a fourth and fifth place to ensure he claims the 2005

Enduro 2 world championship the KTM factory rider has no intention of trying to top the class in Greece – and he doesn't. UFO Corse Yamaha rider Stefan Merriman is the rider that does that as the 2004 E1 world champion tops both days but can do nothing to stop Samuli claiming the title. By finishing as runner-up to Merriman on both days Aro claims world title number three having finished ahead of countryman Valtteri Salonen on day one and Italian Alessandro Botturi on day two.

"I knew that Stefan would be pushing to win but I just wanted to claim my world title," admits Aro after the race. "With Stefan, Fabien Planet and Anders Eriksson all getting injured this season I have been worried that I might be next. I'm pleased I didn't and I'm relieved to have won. I wasn't the fastest rider in my class this year – Stefan was – but I was the best."







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# CLEMENT DESALLE

## THE MX PANDA ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS THEN EATS SHOOTS AND LEAVES...

INTERVIEW BY JP O'CONNELL PHOTO BY SARAH GUTIERREZ

**Q:** You started riding GPs in 2006 and went straight into MX1. Why was that?

**Simon Parker, Cumbria**

**A:** "I got the opportunity to ride in MX1 with Suzuki Europe because I did some races with them and afterwards they wanted to keep me to keep riding the 450. I took the opportunity and for me it was okay – I liked the power of the big bike even at an early age."

**Q:** "Your father also rode motocross – does he play a big part in your career now?"

**Alan Brewer, Norwich**

**A:** "Yeah for sure, he is always watching me and gives me advice on the track. It's really good because he knows me better than anyone else and he is a big, big help for me."

**Q:** You got a second at the Unadilla AMA national – is your plan to eventually ride supercross and motocross in America?

**Tim Martin, Chard**

**A:** "Maybe yeah. I have some ideas about it and I'm also looking at the lifestyle over there because other than the motocross you also need to consider what it will be like living there and I have to be happy in my life. The motocross tracks there are unbelievable – really well made and prepped. It's something I think about and if I had the opportunity then maybe but as yet there have been no offers."

**Q:** "Your season aboard the privateer LS Honda was pretty unbelievable. Do you think the results were so good because there was no expectation or pressure for you to win?"

**Duncan Carnell, Aylesbury**

**A:** "In one sense yes because you know that as soon as you have one good result then the next race people are expecting you to do well again. I am definitely someone who does best without pressure and I think part of why we did so well that season was because of the lack of pressure."

**Q:** As a Belgian riding for the Geboers' brothers factory team that's based in Belgium could life be any better for you?

**Brian Gladstone, Hereford**

**A:** "Oh yeah it's all pretty good right now. The team is not so close to my home because I am in the South of Belgium and they are in the North so it's about a 2 hour drive. But it's okay!"

**Q:** "If you have a free weekend during the season what do you like to do to chill out?"

**Chris Pardow, Gillingham**

**A:** "I like to spend time with my family, my girlfriend and friends and have fun! I like to get out on my motocross bike even when I have an off weekend to maybe ride an enduro or I'll get out in a 4x4."

**Q:** If you had the choice of spending a day riding hardpack or sand which would you choose?

**Craig Moore, Guildford**

**A:** "It would be one week hardpack the next week sand. I like them both and I like to change it around a bit."

**Q:** How disappointing was it not to have won the Des Nations this year?

**Simon Lant, Farnham**

**A:** "We had a really good team and we would have liked to have won our home Des Nations but as you know anything can happen and you need to have luck with you. At the end of the day we had to be happy with second place."

**Q:** Are you happy with all aspects of your riding now or are there parts that you feel you need to improve on?

**Graham Bates, Stafford**

**A:** "I am happy with my riding. Sometimes it's going better than at other times and I would like to improve on my starts. If you can get a good start then it means you can save so much more energy as you don't have to fight your way

through the pack."

**Q:** How big a difference is there between Rockstar Suzuki and your old LS Honda team?

**Pete Oldman, West Bay**

**A:** "Let's say that the pressure is a bit more because there are a lot of people working on the bike for me and we are working really hard together to become world champions. Things like getting spare parts for practice is much easier and we get to test everything before the race – it's always easy to get parts to test very quickly and that's really good."

**Q:** Have you sent Roger DeCoster any texts to see if there's a spare spot on his KTM team?

**Paul Hubbard, Keighley**

**A:** "Haha no! I have had some contact with him in the past but not recently."

**Q:** Is there a healthy respect between you and Toni Cairoli and are you friendly away from the track?

**Stuart Barnes, Morley**

**A:** "Well let's just say that we have normal contact – we say 'hi' when we see each other but it's not like we're good friends. On the track I'm maybe a little more aggressive on some passes and I think in '09 and '10 he found me to be too aggressive because on some of the tracks now you have to try something otherwise you spend the whole race stuck behind someone. Tony and I have forgotten the contact now so it's okay."

**Q:** You don't look like a bear and I'm pretty sure you don't eat bamboo so where does the MX Panda nickname come from?

**Steven Wilson, Southport**

**A:** "This came about because I like to eat and when I was a little guy I used to eat a lot! One time I was at a zoo in France with friends and they found some information about the panda saying that it eats for 14 hours a day – my friend looked at me and that was that!"





# SX DREAMS!

## WILL THE FANTASY OF A GLOBAL SUPERCROSS SERIES EVER COME TRUE?

WORDS BY DAVID BULMER

**L**ove it or hate it supercross has grown into one of the most important aspects of this sport we call motocross. From Anaheim 1 in early January to Las Vegas in May it holds the attention of fans the world over as some of the best riders on the planet showcase their talent in the stadiums of America – and Toronto, Canada.

While the series does only visit North America it is still called the Monster Energy AMA Supercross, an FIM World Championship and as such is one of the most prestigious titles a rider can win in their career. The fact that it's also one of the better paying series in our sport helps draw to a lot of major riders from across the globe and even allows some to go SX-only in order to concentrate on this format and maximise their earning potential, for less than

five months work.

A lot of purists don't like the short races, the frequency of the jumping or the comfortable stadium seating but supercross is here to stay and may even hold the answer to growing motocross to a global market. But what about in Europe?

If you were a casual fan of the sport you'd probably only be aware of the riders racing from the first GP in March/April until the Motocross of Nations in late September/October. However that definitely isn't the case as all throughout the winter in various different countries, indoor arenas are shipping in the dirt and piling in the fans as they host supercross races.

There are events in Germany, France, Great Britain, Greece, Finland, Italy, Netherlands and Switzerland and probably a whole load more if

you look hard enough. While they aren't held in the big outdoor stadiums they are still all held in the major cities and do often sell out their ticket allocation on at least one night of racing.

The series that currently attracts the best field of international riders is the German ADAC supercross championship. While there is a European Championship that is a three race series in Marseille, Genoa and Milan and consists mainly of Italians it's stand-alone events like Bercy and Geneva that are the biggest events. These usually attract a couple of the very best American riders and get the most media attention from the international press. They get these names by putting up start money and it seems to work because Bercy just had its 30th edition and still seems to be as strong as ever.





The biggest problem is that as it stands the best European riders don't compete in any of the races. Antonio Cairoli is content to head down to southern Italy with the good weather and the outdoor tracks and prepare himself for yet another assault on the World championships. KTM team-mate Jeffrey Herlings has also been taking a break from the action and the same goes for a lot of riders as they head into their winter hibernation.

With no indoor SX training facilities and extremely poor weather throughout most of Europe, not many riders are actually able to practice this difficult and dangerous discipline and so rather than risk injury they concentrate on their day job – motocross.

The biggest name from Europe who races a lot of these events is current European SX

Champion Cedric Soubeyras. Having ridden in America before he has the pedigree and is usually the only one who can touch the Americans who make the trip over.

The French are definitely the strongest nationality in Europe both in terms of quality and quantity. Even Christophe Pourcel was seen racing in Bercy much to the delight of the French crowd. Along with America and Australia, France is definitely one of the supercross superpowers with a long history of supercross stars and many athletes that choose to concentrate on this discipline and actually earn the majority of their money at this time of year. Riders like Boris Maillard and Florent Richier regularly win SX races during the winter time but neither of them even try to contest the world championship motocross series.

In order to get the big names to compete in European supercross there needs to be a reason to compete. There needs to be some sort of prestige to winning and a decent amount of prize/start money that gives incentive to the GP regulars to get out and ride supercross during the winter months.

In my mind a true European SX championship needs to be organised and if it's properly set up then the factory teams would support it and legitimise the title. Once the teams are involved, that would then force the riders they pay for motocross to start competing. The better the quality of riders, the better the quality of the racing and so the snowball effect would be in full force.

By tweaking just a few things the series could run as part of what's already in place >>



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very easily. All the international events stay the same and all the national series' remain intact, the only thing that would need adjusting would be the marketing of certain races. By cherry picking certain races from the calendar here is what a true 2012/2013 European SX championship could have looked like...

<b>October 19/20</b>	<i>Marseille, France</i>
<b>November 3</b>	<i>Genoa, Italy</i>
<b>November 9/10/11</b>	<i>Bercy, France</i>
<b>November 17</b>	<i>Milan, Italy</i>
<b>December 1/2</b>	<i>Geneva, Switzerland</i>
<b>December 21/22</b>	<i>Munich, Germany</i>
<b>January 11/12/13</b>	<i>Dortmund, Germany</i>
<b>February 2</b>	<i>Birmingham, Great Britain</i>

Eight stops is quite a step up from the usual four that countries seem to run for a national series but it'll give plenty of chance to determine who truly is the best supercross racer in Europe. It also covers five different countries but without making the travel too far between each round and with a bit of cooperation between promoters, the travel between events could be improved

even further.

And that really is the key thing – that the promoters realise the opportunity to create something bigger and better than what's currently around and to all work together to get it. Of course initially there might be friction as races don't make it into the original eight rounds but each year races could be changed, added and dropped to spread the wealth and allow different promoters the chance to shine.

Races like Bercy and Geneva should probably be mainstays as they are the biggest races currently and attract the international riders – that is certainly something that shouldn't be discouraged. In fact, trying to bring over Americans would benefit the series and add credibility as well as maybe even produce a real Europe versus America feel which doesn't happen anywhere outside of the Motocross des Nations.

As far as the riders are concerned what would be a real incentive would be to offer the champion a spot in the World Supercross Championship almost like the EMX-250 series does with the World Motocross Championship.

With a prize like that, plus all the prize money from the different races and events, it would start to be a legitimate competition and one that would start attracting bigger and bigger names.

So what should happen now is that all the promoters of all the supercross and arenacross events in Europe sit around a table together and hammer out which events get to apart of the inaugural European SX Championship and then get to work promoting it. The FIM steps in and backs the effort and encourages the factory motocross teams to enter which in turn gets some of the bigger GP riders involved.

Venues then sell-out around Europe, Cedric Soubeyras gets to be officially called the best supercross rider in Europe and goes on to get a ride with Geico Honda as reward. In a few years time, due to the success of the series the World Supercross Championship ventures outside of North America again and incorporates a couple of the rounds into their championship creating a true global series with all the best Americans and GP stars competing.

Now who wouldn't want to see something like that?





# GROWING PAINS!



KYLE CUNNINGHAM HAS GROWN A LOT AS A RACER SINCE HE TURNED PRO BUT INJURIES HAVE MEANT HE'S STILL NOT WHERE HE WANTS TO BE AT JUST YET...

Words and photos by **Steve Cox**

**S**ince hitting the pro ranks at the beginning of 2007 Kyle Cunningham has had to grow up a lot. Tossed into the shark tank straight out of the amateurs with Yamaha of Troy he then had to race the 2008 season for the Butler Brothers on a supercross-only deal. Still hungry and feeling he had something to prove, Cunningham went out to the nationals that year like he used to race in the amateurs – with his dad driving him to the races in a pickup truck. He did it as a privateer and turned enough heads to earn another ride with Yamaha on the Star Racing team and that's where he's been ever since.

We caught up with him on New Year's day just as he was about to shake down his 2013 MyPlash.com Yamaha YZ250F race bike a few days before the Anaheim supercross series opener.

**DBR:** This is your sixth year as a pro. I remember you had that YoT ride pretty much right away but you struggled to find a ride after that. What was the transition like from amateur to pro?

**KC:** "My last year as an amateur was 2006. I rode Yamahas and had an opportunity to go to Yamaha of Troy in '07. Some might say I jumped a little too early but I went when I could. I had a good opportunity with them but had some ups and down and injuries.

"In '08 ended up on the Butler Brothers team with not much support for the outdoors. I ended up doing it on my own. I earned a spot with Yamaha again in '09 and like I said it's just been up and down. Luckily this will be my third year with the Yamaha team and I'm really excited about it. It's nice to stay on the same bike and be able to stay comfortable with the testing you've already done and just put it into the next year. The bike's already that much

further ahead so I'm pretty excited about that."

**DBR:** Do you feel like you have a better perspective on things since you spent that summer without a ride? I mean, do you appreciate what you have more than you did before?

**KC:** "For sure. I definitely do appreciate it a lot. I've been through the ups and downs of having nothing and having something. It's definitely a lot easier to be on a team. There's less work that goes into it. When me and my dad did the outdoors on our own in '08 it was a little bit of a struggle. We'd leave on Wednesday night or Thursday morning just to make it to the races on time driving everywhere in a pick up. It definitely wasn't easy but I had one of my best outdoor seasons doing that with my dad. I definitely don't regret any of it. It kind of got me to where I am now – more appreciative of what I >>











have. I want to make the best of the opportunity I have right now and try to have a little better year than this year."

**DBR:** A few years ago you raced a 450 indoors and scored fourth place at the Vegas SX finale and that turned a few heads. Lots of us thought you'd be moving up but you still haven't. Why not?

**KC:** "I'm not really sure when the 450 thing will happen. I've put some really good results in on the thing and I really enjoy riding it. I'm pretty light on it and I feel like I ride it really well. I've had a few other people ask me that question. Really, I think the biggest thing for me is just going out and focusing this year on doing what I know I can do in the Lites class and then making that jump. Hopefully it'll be soon. I really enjoy riding the 450 and I really have fun on it. You don't have to push it as hard to go a little bit faster. My riding style feels a little bit different on it but I enjoy it. So I'm looking forward to it hopefully here in the near future. I think the transition will be, I can't say easy, but I've already shown that I can ride the thing."

**DBR:** Why do you think you're always so under the radar?

**KC:** "I don't know. I mean, I try to stay level headed with everyone and I get along with almost everyone. I am a bit under the radar maybe but I like that in a sense – especially coming into the season. I did really well in 2011 and the phone was blowing up – I felt like I

wasn't really left alone. In 2012 I just had a lot of injuries and I ended up missing quite a few races. I think that's the biggest thing – when you're not there you're just not thought about. Maybe I am a bit under the radar, I wouldn't say over my whole career. I don't really know why that is. Why is it?"

**DBR:** How should I know? But you said your phone was blowing up in 2011. What was that about? Was that all kinds of hangers on hitting you up or actual sponsor-type people?

**KC:** "I think 2011 was just kind of a breakthrough for me. From the last three supercross races to the outdoors I put together a string of fourth place finishes. You kind of asked me the media question so I figured I would throw it in there. When you're up you're on the radar and when you get hurt, you disappear a little bit. 2011 was a really good year for me."

"That was the biggest bummer about 2012 – I was ready for West Coast but messed my knee up a little bit and that sent me back a couple weeks. I ended up having to race East and I went out and fractured my wrist so I had to try and survive through Supercross. At first I thought I needed to sit out and get healthy and that way I was fresh for outdoors but I didn't – I kept racing. I went out at the first outdoor – about the time my wrist was healed up – and did my ankle so it was a little bit of a bummer."

**DBR:** Your riding style has changed over the years. You used to be pretty stiff in

Cunningham lays down the power in last year's East Coast series







2013 is Jeremy Martin's rookie year in SX



## THE PROSPECT!

KC'S ROOKIE TEAM-MATE JEREMY MARTIN...

Jeremy Martin has literally been around moto since birth but this is his first full season in the pro class. The younger brother of Alex Martin – who has put in quite a few really great results in supercross and the AMA Nationals over the years – Jeremy is said to actually be faster than Alex when they practice together. But practice isn't racing.

Jeremy and Alex both grew up at Spring Creek MX in Millville, Minnesota which has hosted a round of the AMA Nationals for about as long as I can remember. Martin is Cunningham's team-mate for 2013 and while Cunningham is riding the Lites West, Martin is taking on the East.

**DBR:** When you moved to the pro class this last summer what did you think of it as far as pace is concerned? Did riding with your brother help you know what the pace was going to be before you got there?  
**JM:** "The pace in the professional ranks from the gate drop is way more intensified. Everybody is wide-open and it's not just three or four people like at the Amateur Nationals. There are 15 guys that are all right there. If you make a mistake, you guys are bumping and banging bars in the first couple corners trying to get by each other. Riding with my brother I had an idea of what the pace was going to be. I've always been a tick faster than Alex during the week so it was actually really good for the both of us because we were both so close and pushed each other. One moto I'd be faster and he'd be pissed off or the next moto he'd be faster and I'd be like 'darn it' so it really helped

push the both of us."

**DBR:** How have you been adjusting to supercross?

**JM:** Riding supercross has been good. When I first rode it I was just sketchy on it. I was a bit timid and didn't really charge anything – I was just kind of riding around the track. I'm a lot better now and I'm starting to get more aggressive. I've been training down at the Carmichael farm for a little bit now and things are coming along pretty well. I can't thank them enough for helping me this year and I'm really looking forward to a good season."

**DBR:** What do you expect when you finally line up to race a supercross?

**JM:** "My expectations as far as riding indoors this year – coming in as a rookie – is just to be consistently up front somewhere. Hopefully, I'll be battling with everyone and just having a solid season all year in supercross and motocross. Staying off the ground the whole season, that's really my goal. That way, going into 2014 I'll be ready and have had a full season being healthy and I can be a contender going into 2014."

**DBR:** Do you and your brother Alex have any running bets as far as one of you beating the other?

**JM:** "As far as bets between Alex and I, we talk smack, that's for sure. He'll call me after he worked out really hard and had a good day on the bike and he's like, "Oh, I'm going to kick your butt. You'd better be ready." I'll be like, "all right, we'll see come time for the

race'. So we definitely talk some smack and have a good time with it."

**DBR:** What did you think the first time you swung your leg over your pro race bike compared to your amateur bike?

**JM:** "The difference between my amateur and pro bike was big. My amateur bike was the fastest bike I ever rode and then I rode my national bike a couple weeks before Loretta's when I was out testing in California. I pulled off the track and was like, 'oh my gosh!'. I was just grinning from ear to ear because I couldn't believe how fast it was. I was telling the team, 'you guys have been hiding this motor from me. What are you doing? I want this thing for Loretta's!'"

**DBR:** What's the best part about having Ryan Morais as a team manager? Does it bother you that he can beat you on a supercross track?

**JM:** "No! Having Ryan as a team manager is awesome. I couldn't really ask for anyone else. As far as me coming in and being a rookie he's been doing this for a long time – especially supercross – so he knows the drill. He knows everything that's going on and it's really helped me out a lot.

"Every time I go out to California he's constantly giving me tips. He'll call me throughout the week and ask how things are going. I'll let him know how I'm doing and keep him up to date. So it's worked out really well and I'm really excited to be there on the MyPlash.com/Metal Mulisha Yamaha team for the next two years – and also be with Ryan as well."







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A change in set up is helping  
every aspect of KC's riding



supercross but now you flow a lot more. Did you make a conscious decision to change? What happened there?

**KC:** "I'm not too sure. I mean, I feel the same. In '07 it was probably a little bit of nerves and stuff like that but I think it's just that I'm having fun right now. The biggest thing for me is I'm having fun – I feel comfortable. The bike is working well and the team has been putting a lot of effort into testing with me. We've actually made some bike changes that get my body position a little bit better and I feel a lot better on the bike."

**DBR:** What did you change?

**KC:** "Just made it a little taller on the top [handlebar] mounts to give me a little bit of room. I've been around the same setup since '07 – low bars, low mount. So our new team manager Ryan Morais thought it would be something good to change."

**DBR:** So it makes you stand up straighter?

**KC:** "Yeah, he kind of pointed it out. I argued with him for an hour. I'm like, 'No, that's not going to work. I'm telling you. Not going to happen.'

That's been the same since '07.' Sure enough, we tried it and I liked it. Like I said, I think as well as the bike working good and just all of the effort me and the team have put into it it's about having fun."

"Just being 100 per cent right now and feeling healthy again is the best thing for me. I'm having fun on the bike, I'm enjoying putting the laps in and I've just been working really hard. I mean, in November we did five days a week in the gym and four days a week of riding. I feel stronger, my body feels fitter. I think it's just one of those things – everything falls into place and starts feeling good and that's when you feel good on the bike."

**DBR:** With all of the experience Morais has – especially in supercross – what's it like to have him as a team manager?

**KC:** "I think it's going to be really good. Mo's put a lot of time in watching me at the track. I apologize to him because I keep him working late. He watches on the track and if something doesn't look that great he gives me some advice on the section. I think that's the biggest thing. I

told Bobby Regan – that's our team owner – that this is the best decision I think you've ever made. He comes to the track, he points out lines, he helps me out. He's filling in all the blanks and really working the whole picture. That's what's good for me. It's like getting a riding coach."

"Mo comes from a good background – being one of the best testers. From what I've already felt on the bike and the improvements we've made, he's done some really good testing before I even had to. Like I said, you need to trust what Ryan's saying and listen to him and really go off of what he's saying because of the background he comes from being a racer."

"Talking about lines, I was struggling a little bit at Monster Cup and we sat there and talked about lines for 15 minutes. Basically just talked for another 30 and it kind of helped me pull myself out of a hole when I wasn't feeling that great. I think that's what I'm looking forward to this year is just having him at the races; being there to walk the track and look at lines and figure out what things we need to do to be the best we can that night. That's what I'm really looking forward to."



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# CUMBERLAND SAUSAGE!

WE HOOK UP WITH LAKE DISTRICT LOTHARIOS JONNY WALKER AND JAMIE LAW...

INTERVIEWS BY JP O'CONNELL

**DBR:** Who would you like to play you in a film of your life?

**JL:** "Just because Sutti is gonna be reading this I'll say Guy Martin"

**JW:** "Keith Lemon – he would spice it up a lot!"

**DBR:** When did you last clean an air filter?

**JL:** "It's been a while since I've ridden but all the time during the season."

**JW:** "About two weeks ago. I had used all my filters so I had to clean and oil all of them!"

**DBR:** What was the last lie that you told and who was it to?

**JL:** "I told a plasterer that I had a quote for a job on the house that I'm building that was miles cheaper than it actually was. It worked too."

**JW:** "I told Julian my mechanic that I wasn't going to the after party in Finland. It was a blatant lie but he believed me until I turned up."

**DBR:** Something you eat that you know you shouldn't?

**JL:** "Galaxy Counters and Ben & Jerrys."

**JW:** "I'm good with my food but the very few times I have a dirty McDonald's I feel guilty and greasy!"

**DBR:** You're in second and on the leader's rear wheel – do you take him out on the last corner for the win?

**JL:** "It's a no brainer! Especially if it's Jonny and we're racing at the local Bass Creek Wednesday night national!"

**JW:** "I don't think I would but it depends how we had battled during the race. I would try and pass fair and then the win would feel a lot better – like you had earned it."

**DBR:** Do you own a pair of pajamas?

**JL:** "No way, although I am considering a onesie!"

**JW:** "I don't but when I was in hospital the other week my mum turned up with some she must have saved from when I was like 10."

**DBR:** What's been the highlight of your career so far?

**JL:** "I'd say finishing 16th overall at the Italian GP this season and fifth overall in the Maxxis."

**JW:** "Got to be winning Erzberg – but this whole year has been awesome."

**DBR:** What car do you drive?

**JL:** "Transporter van and a BMW330."

**JW:** "A white VW Transporter aka The Love Bus."

**DBR:** What car would you drive if money were no object?

**JL:** "They don't bother me but probably Ben Brayton's Big Red although I'm not sure money can buy that! It's a Volvo T5 and it's a heap of sh\*t really but don't tell him I said that!"

**JW:** "I would like a Bentley Continental GT then I could just cruise."

**DBR:** If you could change anything about yourself what would it be?

**JL:** "I would trade my knee in for a new one. I wouldn't even be bothered if they gave me nothing for this one!"

**JW:** "To be stacked like J-Law."

**DBR:** If you could meet any person – dead or alive – who would it be?

**JL:** "Barry Sheene."

**JW:** "Mike Tyson, he's an animal."

**DBR:** If you could have any super power for a week what would it be?

**JL:** "Flying would be the one."

**JW:** "To be able to fly. Even though I hate heights I think it would be cool to cruise around."

**DBR:** If you were shipwrecked on an Island what three things would you want with you?

**JL:** "Hammer, nails and a saw."

**JW:** "Phone, beach towel, sun cream."

**DBR:** What's been the most embarrassing thing you've done while drunk?

**JL:** "Quite often I go to swap hands with my drink and for some reason I let go with the one hand before I have hold of it with the other. That's pretty embarrassing when it smashes

everywhere."

**JW:** "I don't get that drunk but it'll just be the usual – getting blown out by a chick!"

**DBR:** Favourite race you've ever been in?

**JL:** "Weston 2003 I think it was. I was on a KX125 and finished fourth – that was lots of fun."

**JW:** "The local Bass GP as all my friends are riding and it's a good laugh every year."

**DBR:** Be honest, how often do you Google yourself?

**JL:** "I did it for the first time two months ago!"

**JW:** "I never Google myself but I YouTube myself after every race to see if I look fast though!"

**DBR:** Blonde or brunette?

**JL:** "Blonde."

**JW:** "Where's the ginger option? I don't mind to be honest – whichever is the best laugh."

**DBR:** Is winning a race better than sex?

**JL:** "I've forgotten what both are like!"

**JW:** "Yeah definitely! You need to win the race to get the girls!"

**DBR:** One thing about your riding style that you would like to improve?

**JL:** "The ability to let it hang out a little more."

**JW:** "I would love to do massive whips on purpose."

**DBR:** What's your favourite film?

**JL:** "Taken – I will find you and I will kill you'."

**JW:** "Dumb & Dumber – it gets better every time."

**DBR:** What's your most annoying habit?

**JL:** "I have a habit of not being able to do two things at once if that counts?"

**JW:** "Biting my nails and blisters on my hands."

**DBR:** If you had to permanently give up the internet, your mobile phone or music which would it be?

**JL:** "Mobile phone. I've just had three weeks without one and loved it."

**JW:** "Music."





Next time he went he was armed with his mum's Kodak Brownie camera.  
After art college he mixed life as a graphic designer, magazine art director, photographer and part-time art college tutor with motocross and photo-journalism. Now he's a commentator, painting pictures with words. He never did get a proper job...

Jack Burnicle is the godfather (our words, not his) of British MX journalism. Born in Billingham, County Durham, to Bella and nutty (his words, not ours) musical genius Stan Burnicle, Jack was mad about cars and motor racing as a kid.  
At sweet 16 he got a motorbike, rode it to a local 'scramble' and was instantly, hopelessly hooked.



GORDON JONES + DAVE TOMASIK CELEBRATE A THIRD FOUR-STROKE CROWN IN 1985

# DOG DAYS!

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF FOUR-STROKE AVENGER DAVE TOMASIK...

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle

**A** glorious band of seventies' and eighties' motocross stars pogoed the night away in Hereford last November. The occasion was a surprise 60th birthday bash organised by his eldest daughter Kelli to celebrate Welsh border hero Dave Tomasik reaching that unlikely milestone! The man who led the 1980's four-stroke revival in an age of smoking stokers still rampages round the Herefordshire hills in the company of fellow speedy old farts like Andy Robertson. Precursor to the national ACU series, the Haynes Four-stroke championship was dominated by Tomasik and his Cecil KTM but 'The Dog' also enjoyed a distinguished career at the very pointed end of British championship racing during a period when the UK produced three MX world-beaters.

The son of Polish prisoner-of-war 'Ted' Tomasik, who remained in Peterchurch after World War Two, David left school at 16 to become an apprentice metalworker in nearby Hereford and bought a humble Honda 90 to make the round trip. He also began to 'cut about the field on a couple of old bikes', spectated at Builth Wells and Hawkstone Park and,

in 1971, competed in a couple of local meetings on borrowed bikes before his folks loaned him the cash to buy a second-hand CZ. He was 19. "I was forever leading junior races but ending upside down," grins the impish Tomasik. "I wasn't very safe, but I don't think the bike was very good!"

His spectacular progress caught the eye of Ledbury car dealer, the late Gordon 'GC' Jones. "We would always watch the junior races to see how many times David fell off," Jones once recalled. "He was a renowned crasher then!" Undaunted, Tomasik bought a brand new CZ in 1973, started winning and met Joan, a beautiful local girl who became Mrs Tomasik two years later.

David's venerable Mini pick-up now had to cart as many as four people to the races! He put in an increasing amount of effort: "I'd worked hard to buy that CZ, so I wasn't going to neglect it. And starting to win a bit of prize money provided some incentive!" This dedication reaped its reward. Gordon Jones was impressed. "He hadn't much money, but he always turned his kit out well," said 'GC'. "And he was the sort of character you take to. So we sold both our bikes and bought him a new CZ for 1974."

This amicable and effective partnership remained rock solid for the rest of David's career and the

impetuous Tomasik acknowledges Gordon's calming, unflappable influence on his racing. They received help from CZ importer Dave Bickers and when he and Joan were wed their three-day honeymoon revolved around collecting a new bike from Ipswich!

1975 launched the British Open championship. The Dog finished sixth in the support class and rose into the top rank of British motocross, aged 23, in 1976, ending up 26th overall and changing make of machine for the only time in his career to KTM. Gordon, who would become proprietor of HC Cecil's Motorcycles in Ledbury bought one bike and KTM importer Comerfords supplied the other.

1977 proved a memorable season, third place behind Graham Noyce at Builth Wells the outstanding result as he finished every moto on his way to ninth in the series. But the next two years were ruined by debilitating injuries, the strong, wilful semi Welshman constantly condemned to making brave comebacks. In 1979, Gordon persuaded a reluctant Tomasik to ride the Irish 125GP at Slane, just north of Dublin. I accompanied them on one of the most memorable road trips of my life – their hilarious repartee would have graced any stage!

Redundancy from work on the local estate meant David, Joan and >>

## DESCRIPTION SIGNALEMENT

Nom		*Wife		Femme	
Occupation		Profession		Titulaire	
Place of birth		Lieu de naissance		BULLINGHAM	
Date of birth		Date de naissance		9/3/47	
Country of Residence		Pays de Résidence		ENGLAND	
Height		Taille		5 ft. 11 in.	

Visual signature of bearer  
Signature du titulaire

Visual signature of wife  
Signature de la femme

(S.37315)



All the cut-and-thrust of old  
as Dave Tomasic hunkles the  
mighty Goan Cecis KTM  
to victory in the Haynes  
4-stroke series final round  
at Lammcherty, Somerset.





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DAVE TOMASIK STORMS TO  
HAYNES 4-STROKE NATIONAL  
TITLE IN 1986 ON THE  
MIGHTY GORDON JONES -  
PREPARED BY CECIL KTM.

two year old Kelli would have to leave their tithe cottage so he decided to build a new home beneath the Black Mountains in Peterchurch. Throughout 1980, Tomasik worked unstintingly to complete a magnificent bungalow into which they moved, with baby Natasha, in late November – which makes all the more remarkable his sensational on-track performances.

Overcoming early season shoulder damage, a significant victory in the 'Battle of Newbury' national on June 1 heralded a spectacular burst of top six Open championship results. Then the final title showdown returned to Newbury where another brilliant win in treacherous conditions swept Tomasik triumphantly to third in the series with another 100 per cent scoring record. Gordon pointed out why, "David will never stop unless absolutely forced to," he said. "He will get a bike to the finish when other riders would have pulled out."

His 1981 Open season was highlighted by a third place behind world champions Hudson and Noyce at Nantwich and a ride in the Austrian 500GP at Sittendorf where he lost 10th – and a championship point – to team-mate Gerard Rond on the final lap. But he really impressed on the aging air-cooled, drum-braked, twin-shock 250 in a season-long duel with Jonathan Wright's full factory Kawasaki. Another wonderful win in greasy conditions, this time at Bulth Wells, took the 250 nationals to the wire in Cumbria, where the Dog rode the last round with a plaster cast on his left wrist having broken his scaphoid mid-week. Second in the series was a tremendous outcome, topped off by the birth of third daughter Claire in early 1982. But the new watercooled 250 proved horribly outpaced and the Open season began badly, David's elbow dislocated in a freak accident at Hawkstone's opening round.

Also, changes to his big bore bike created a beast. "The works 500 two-stroke had been on a par with production Maicos and had trick Marzocchi forks," explains Tomasik. "But now

they had upside down WP units and were quite awful to ride – a real bone-shaker. It would shake your hands off the bars!" KTM were interested in marketing their Rotax engined four-stroke so 'GC' and The Dog entered it in some Open championship races. "She had an underpowered long stroke engine, not high-tech stuff, but smooth and nicer to ride."

The four-stroke scene also better suited the ambivalent approach of the Cecil KTM team! "You had to be ultra-competitive every weekend in the Open championship," recalls David. "The four-stroke was a more leisurely approach – more like me and Gordon! We were always late for meetings because of working late and things coming up. I'd be round his place throwing stones at his window to wake him up. Now we could miss practice and it didn't matter!" His decision was helped when out training with Dave Watson. "I tried his trick Kawasaki and it felt like an armchair. I thought f'ck me, I'm wasting my time here!" Though he did claim a dashing second to Willie Simpson in the first ever Weston Beach Race.

The Haynes championship, sponsored by the Somerset-based motorsports book publisher, also suited Dog's aversion to travelling. Although he enjoyed some success in French internationals, he never shared Gordon's love of the long-distance haul. "I hated it," he admits. "I'd rather go for a walk with my dog. But GC would drive to the factory in Austria to pick up a packet of fags!"

Helped by an engine bored out to 530cc mid-season, Tomasik won the 1983 Haynes series and beat ex-world champion Bengt Aberg and five-time grand prix winner Jaak van Velthoven in a four-stroke international at Streatham Hills. In 1984 Bryan Goss became KTM importer and Tomasik won the Haynes title again. "Badger sold quite a lot of four-strokes," says Tomasik. "He liked me because I didn't want any flash kit – mine was almost retro!"



HAPPY TOMASIK ENJOYS  
HIS THIRD HAYNES FOUR-  
STROKE TITLE IN 1985

In 1985 he got a works 620 KTM, racked up his Haynes hat-trick and added a fourth success in 1986 for good measure. "Gordon and I never, ever exchanged a cross word," recalls David fondly. "Probably because I never expected much and his expectations were never high!" Georg Reiter was developing a water-cooled 500 four-banger in GPs and GC persuaded The Dog to race one more season. "I wasn't really enjoying it any more," confesses Tomasik. "I was having more fun riding in the mountains with my mates!" Gordon collected a new water-pumper from the factory in time to load it up and win all three races down at Torridge, in Devon. But the bike misfired all year and the popular Cecil KTM crew finally called it a day at the end of 1987. Ironically, the ACU launched their own Four-stroke National championship the following season...





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**W**hile weekend warriors may not go through clutches in the same way a grand prix rider will once they do start to wear their deterioration is still fairly rapid. Common signs your clutch is on its way out is excessive slack at the lever or the feeling that your RPMs are out of proportion to the pace you're travelling so if you get the sensation you're riding with your clutch half way in it's probably time to replace it.

It's not a disaster though if you're experiencing slip as complete aftermarket clutch kits – containing steels, fibres and springs – are available for half the price of a

stocker and the whole lot can be changed by an expert in less than 10 minutes. If it's your first time that's probably a little out of reach but if you've got the right tools the job should take DIY mechanics less than an hour.

So as well as a little time what do you need? A new clutch kit wouldn't go amiss and a quality torque wrench as well as 8 and 10mm t-bars would be handy. You'll also want some oil because although some people will tell you that it's possible to change your clutch without dropping the oil – by laying the bike on its side – why would you want to run a brand-new clutch in old contaminated oil? That makes no sense at all...



# DRIVETIME!

**KEEP YOUR CLUTCH GRIPPIN' N' RIPPIN' WITH DR DIRT'S PLATE SWAP MASTER CLASS...**

Words by **ROBIN BAYMAN** photos by **ANDREW WALCH**





**01** Submerge the plates in new engine or gear oil so you get complete coverage. It used to be the case that you had to soak the plates for a whole week but that's not common practice these days.



**02** Drain the oil and then remove all the bolts from the cover. To access the lower bolt you may need to press the brake pedal down. If it won't push down far enough try forcing the brake cylinder inward to make the pads slack – the brake pedal will travel further this way.



**03** Since different length bolts hold the cover to the motor it's a good idea to draw the cover on a piece of cardboard with the bolt positions identified. Push each bolt into the card as removed then you know exactly where each one needs to go back.



**04** With the cover removed, the next bolt heads you'll see are the clutch spring bolts. These trap the springs in place and need to be undone evenly, just four or five turns on each will let the clutch boss release evenly until it can be removed.



**05** With the clutch hub out of the way the old plates can be lifted or picked out. Once they're all out give everything a good clean with contact cleaner.



**06** When everything is clean drop the new plates into the basket one at a time – first a fibre plate followed by a steel, then a fibre, a steel and so on. You will lose time if you try to fit them in bundles as the centre hub will never align with the outer basket. When all the plates are in the centre boss can be replaced too.



**07** If you have a torque wrench now would be the time to use it to nip the bolts up. The threaded prongs invariably don't strip, they prefer to snap and the clutch needs them all to work. Nip the anchor bolts evenly then torque them going from one to the opposite one until they are all secure.



**08** Once the clutch is all back and tight press the brake pedal out of the way and replace the cover. Now fit the bolts safe in the knowledge you know exactly where each one came from.



**09** Once the cover is tight, pump up the brake pedal and reset the cable adjustment so there's 2mm of slack in the cable. Now refill the gearbox/motor with the required amount of oil and the job's a good 'un!





# DOG SOLDIERS!

CORPORAL WAKKER AND PRIVATE WARNER PLACE THEIR HANDS ON A FINE PAIR OF HUSKY PUPPIES...

WORDS BY GEOFF WALKER PHOTOS BY NUNO LARANJEIRA

**A** new year and a fresh beginning for our testing program begins. Through this year we'll be putting plenty of products and bikes through their paces and bringing honest and informative feedback direct to you. Of course we're gonna have fun while out on the tracks and trails but it's all in the interest of finding the good, the bad and the ugly.

As well as the regular faces – that's myself, Martyn Tucker, Fred Radley, Suttly and The Bear – our test team will feature a few random humans this year. Our first guest tester is that crazy man of dirt biking, mountain bike and rock hopping – Rob Warner. Caveman's having some time off from chatting sh\*t on the telly over the winter months and that's given him plenty of time to test some products and bikes for us.

• We currently have two 2013 model

bikes in from Husqvarna (an MX racing model TC250R and a cross country all-rounder in the form of the TXC310R) and two bikes from KTM too (a 350 and 450SX-F) which we'll be running in the Arenacross UK championship with Tom Church – and maybe someone else – onboard through the SR75 World Team powered by Molson racing program. A bit of full-on indoor bar bashing is always a great way to begin a year of testing. We've also got a beautiful RM-Z250 on its way over from Suzuki. But for now let's get back to those Huskies...

The Italian Beauties from Dave Plum and his hard working team at Husqvarna UK arrived in two forms... My – it's mine! – beautiful TXC310R arrived absolutely brand new and untouched and the TC250R arrived with some wear and tear from other testing duties but still in great shape.

For the initial shakedown myself,

Warner and Mr Tucker hit up the mighty Marshfield where conditions were a tad heavy on the MX, enduro and endurocross tracks but still great fun. And the sun made an appearance too although SuttDawg was missing due to his latest knee operation. So while I ran in the fully pimped in its Dare Decals livery TXC310R it was up to Roberto and Martinez to put the TC250R through its paces.

I'm pumped to have the Dare Decals crew working with us as the look of the graphics on the TXC310R are superb as the simple and clean layout works with the lines on the Husky. Dare Decals are using the original Thick Stuff graphic material ([thethickstuff.com](http://thethickstuff.com)) and will be working hard on the DBR test fleet to develop their products to make them as indestructible as possible.

If you read my original 2013 Husky test you will know I am a big >>



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fan of the TCX310R. I find the versatile nature of the chassis and almost perfect valving of the forks breed confidence and therefore increase speed across any terrain. I was looking forward to getting my hands on the bike at Marshfield so I could really get a feel for everything on familiar going and I can assure you I was not disappointed...

From the off I felt right at home with the stock bars and entire cockpit area. Comfort and correct body positioning are key so it's great to feel at one with a bike immediately. Straight into shooting and the motor loosened up while Rob and Martyn kept pinning the laps on the TC250R and our outgoing RM-Z450. The power and easy handling hit me as being even better than I had remembered.

I took things steady for an hour to let everything bed in then gave the bike a quick front to back check over. The plastics' bolts needed a quick nip up as did the 6mm motor bolts on the clutch inner cover and crank cases. This is all standard procedure on any brand new bike and we will be stripping and grease tipping all fixings and linkage points on all the bikes soon. I spent the day getting the feel for the bike in the situations on offer but most of my time was spent hitting turns and jumps as hard as

possible – like a kid in a candy shop...

The endurocross track took a pounding as I wanted to check the reaction and early pick up from the fuel injection system. It was flawless and picked up from nothing no matter how hard I hit the throttle. Can a bike really be this sorted straight from the crate? It seems the answer is yes. No matter what anyone says the Euro manufacturers are now pushing hard to make every bike great from the crate and the healthy competition between them all is a great thing.



**2013 HUSQVARNA TCX310R**  
**RIDER: GEOFF WALKER**





# GUEST TEST!

## WELCOMING ROB WARNER TO THE TEST TEAM...

When I first got told I was going to get to ride a Husqvarna TC250R four-stroke to ride I must admit some preconceptions ran through my head but having never owned a European motocross bike I was definitely really curious to throw a leg over it.

So far conditions in this tropical climate we live in haven't been very flattering to the little Husky and it ends up with so much mud clinging to it that it weighs more than Vanessa Feltz directly after an all you can eat buffet. Despite the insane amounts of mud attaching itself you can feel just how strong this motor is off the bottom – it's 250 two-stroke snappy and continues to pull strongly right through the range. I haven't ridden a 250F since way before this injection lark came along but this feels fast, its initial hit is sharp, it runs perfectly, there's no bogging and it's easy to start no matter how hot it is which is good because there's no hot start fitted – not needed I guess.

To be fair I can't wait to ride it somewhere other than the Somme to see what it can really do but even with a ton of clay onboard and 16 stone of me it pulled third up Marshfield's long hills without needing to hit the limiter in second.

The rider compartment is great even for someone as tall as me – I love it! I put the bar mounts to their forward position and it feels spot on.

Brembo brakes are so far perfect and I think they give more feel than the Nissins that I'm used too. I love the eccentric snail cam adjuster on the rear brake lever – a nice touch you don't get from the Japanese giants.

One thing the Husky did do was instantly make me realize how bad the gearbox is on my RM-Z450 – on

that bike you really need to take your time changing up through the box while on the husky you just touch the lever and it upshifts fast and seamlessly.

When I put it on the work stand after its first outing I noticed a lot of play in the rear linkage – pretty weird on a brand new bike. Luckily it turned out to be one of the nuts on the linkage was pretty loose. I tightened it back up and all the play has disappeared and it's not come loose again despite me putting eight long, hard hours on it. In fact nothing at all has come loose.

So far I've got to say I love this bike and I'm just dying to ride it on a dry local motocross track. I think then I'll be able to tell really just how well it goes.



**2013 HUSQVARNA TC250R**  
**RIDER: ROB WARNER**

**Warner wrings the Husky's neck**



**The team cuddle up for Nuno's Nikon**





# VISION EXPRESS!

## VISUALISING SUCCESS MIGHT MAKE YOU AN ACTUAL WINNER QUICKER THAN YOU'D THINK...

WORDS BY ED BRADLEY

If you know how you did last year and you've worked out how to make a difference for the 2013 racing season now it's time to get passionate about what you want and to create a very clear vision of it in your mind. A vision that's so clear and exciting that it makes you jump up and down in your seat.

The reason why you want to do this is because you will then generate beliefs that support your specific goals. The thing about believing in something is that your brain then operates on automatic pilot taking in any input from your surroundings and searching for references to confirm your belief regardless of what it is.

For example if you believe that one tyre manufacturer is the best you will notice the winners that are using that make of tyre whether that's in a novice event, AMA race or world championship moto! Even though there are many other winners using different makes of tyre, subconsciously you filter out what you believe to support and reaffirm its truth.

It's safe to say that everybody is different – everybody has had different experiences that are unique and individual to them alone. No one person has shared the same experience as you, through your eyes. The beliefs you generate are from previous experiences whether that is a physical experience or from someone close to you or someone you admire.

So this is where the fun begins. If you were to cast aside all your experiences, beliefs, disbeliefs, other people's beliefs and expectations of you, even your own identity now ask yourself what do you want to achieve by the end of the 2013 racing season. Write down all the things that you really enjoy about racing and all the things that you want to experience in yourself.

Think of the things that will continually increase your passion in racing and in yourself so that the more you think of new

ways to increase your passion in racing, the relationships you have, family, self development etc it drives your mind in to an overly excited fuzz bomb that just makes you want bounce up and down more times than Tigger on his bounciest day. Forget about everybody else at this moment in time – it's all about what you want to happen. Let your mind run wild – be as specific as you can with so much detail that you think it's insane to have that much specificity in your thoughts!

Create a really, really clear vision of you successfully completing all the goals you set for 2013. This will provide you with newfound motivation to the point where doing jobs that you didn't previously like doing become as easy as breathing.

There is something that is vitally important though. I do this exercise with all my students when we begin a training school and I love the silence as riders consider the consequences! It's quite simple and you have to pay attention to what pictures you create in your mind from the following instructions. Firstly, let your mind go blank and now read the following statement before remembering the first thing you think of. Ready? Don't think of a blue tree.

Now if you were paying attention the first thing you thought of was a blue tree! Your brain is unable to process negatives and it has to think of what you told it not to do before your brain can change the image in to something else. How many parents have told their kids 'whatever you do don't fall off'? The poor kid has to then picture the image of falling off before, if at all, it's changed to something else – whatever that may be!

The reason you need to know this is because thoughts become things and if you only focus on 'not getting hurt in 2013' what is the image you are continually holding in your mind? That's right – getting hurt!

If your focus is based on a vision with

a positive outcome – for example 'in 2013 I'm going to be fit and healthy throughout the season' – then your brain will start to search your environment for things that you need to know that will help you develop and support your new belief of continually staying fit and healthy.

It is better still and even more empowering to focus your vision on a result you want because it has nothing to do with 'not getting hurt' or being 'fit and healthy'. Of course, to finish a championship in a certain position you'll want to finish all your races which requires being fit and healthy!

When you create a vision in your mind it's easy to just make a picture but it's important to make an image that holds all the emotions and desires that you thought about at the beginning of this article. To do that, set aside some time on your own so that you can relax, empty your head of thoughts and just think about building your spectacular vision. It's your vision, in your head and there is no right or wrong way to build it. If it's hard to create a picture, then may be you want to work on the feeling first and then build up the sights and sounds, or, start with the sounds, which ever is easiest.

Make it so real that if your vision is crossing over the finish line, make it so that you can actually feel the grips in your hands, your feet on the pegs, knees and backside touching the seat, the tyres running over the ground and your heart beating in your chest! Get the picture?

The more you practice this the easier it becomes and you will get to have a better idea of what you actually want out of your racing – and out of life. And then all that is left to do is to take action.

Thoughts become things only if you pay attention to what you need to learn and what action you need to take to achieve something that you've never done before. Let go of your old limitations, create your visions and then totally go for it and make it happen.







# GEARS of WAR!

ROB BATTLES HIS WAY THROUGH THE FLEET'S THREE BOXES AND GETS FLASHBACKS TO AN EARLIER PROJECT N' ALL...

Words by Robin Bayman Photos by Andrew Walch

**F**or many the daunting thought of opening up a gearbox carries similar fears to removing the back of a finely balanced Swiss watch as people expect springs and levers to ping out everywhere which will require a genius to put it all back and keep it in working order. While gearboxes are not so difficult and few things fly off and disappear in the darkest hole of the garage we don't recommend splitting your engine just to familiarise yourself with its complex workings.

Depending on what bike you run, you may have eight, 10 or even 12 gears slid

onto just two shafts in the gearbox. Usually smaller capacity bikes run more gears and each pair make up one gear with one driven and the other driving. Gearbox theory is easy, one shaft takes its drive from the engine via the clutch and the other drives the back wheel via the chain and sprockets.

Various names exist for the shafts. The most recognised are Clutch Shaft and Drive Shaft and the gears that fit to each are listed as second gear pinion, third gear pinion, fourth gear pinion and so on. On the clutch shaft first gear is normally machined as part of the shaft while the drive shaft usually has individual gears along its length

— some of which are free turning, others are locked on a spline with the ability to slide left to right as selected. The gears that slide have castellated ends known as 'Dogs' while other free turning gears have female slots known as Dog Pockets.

Sliding gears do not float of their own free will, their action is governed by selector forks which traverse gears to ensure they do not contact another gear or positively engage the dogs into one of the adjacent gears. As bike engines are similar in width, bikes with fewer gears normally have gears that are more substantial in width for added strength and quality of shift.





Gear selection has three main areas to look at. First there is the selector shaft – otherwise identified as the bit your gear lever fits on. The selector drum is located within the gearbox and although it has a bearing at either end does not spin – it simply revolves backwards or forwards for each gear selected. Slots machined into the body of the drum are for

pegs on the third and final part of the gearbox – the selector forks – to locate in. The selector forks are pronged items that fit into slots in some gears to slide as the fork's peg follows the pattern of the selector drums slots – sliding the relevant gear along the

shaft. Distance is determined by a star shaped gear on the end of the sector drum which a sprung gear wheel fits in to secure it. You may not have split a motor but if you have removed a clutch outer casing will have seen it although it will have been partially obscured below the clutch basket.

Collectively those three areas operate the gearbox, often performing three movements with every click of the gear selector to engage one gear as it disengages another. The term false neutral relates to when two gears don't mesh on the dogs and is common on worn gearboxes although later mechanisms are >>



## WHO IS ROB BAYMAN?

Spannerman to Neil Prince, Jon Barfoot and Steve McMillan in Brit MX and GPs. International support to HRC developer Takayuki Miyouchi and US SX star Ricky Ryan. DBR tester and contributor since '97.



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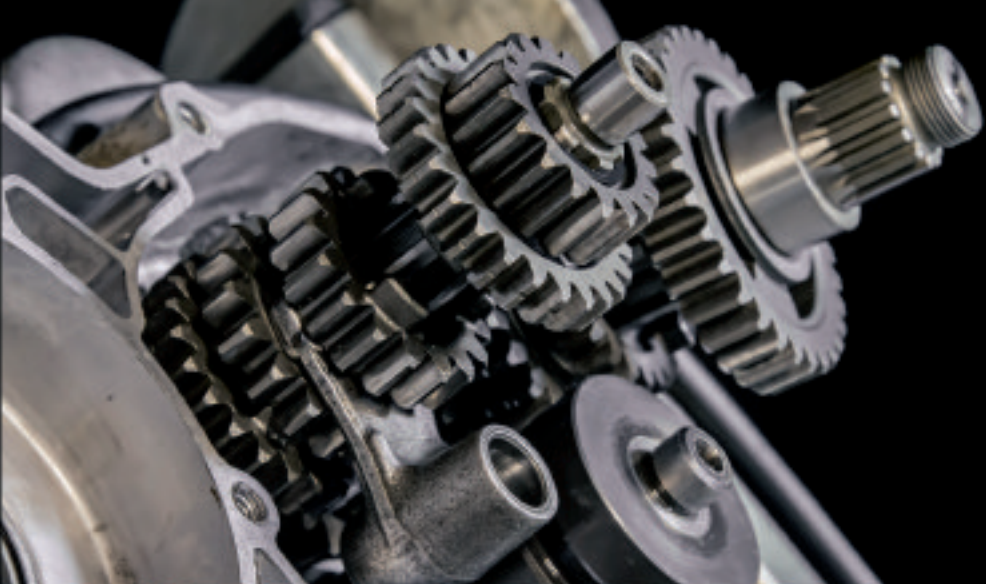
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far more reliable than those of generations past. For bikes with four speed transmissions there are only usually two selector forks – where five and six speed bikes have three.

We thought we were lucky with the fleet as we had full gears on each bike but the early strip soon revealed a huge anomaly on the YZ85 as some butcher had done the dreaded home repair. With super hard metal shafts, the threads on the end of a shaft rarely strip, unless they are cross threaded in the first instance. The YZ had a series of peculiar spacers and nuts holding the sprocket on the shaft and after removal it was deemed beyond service. Over the years we have seen any amount of cobbled repairs to sprocket shafts – the worst being welding the sprocket on. Other than the amount of heat produced punishing the seal and giving the mother of all oil leaks once the sprocket wears its game over – or weld it again!



Remember our frequent quote that oil is cheap and gearboxes are expensive? Well we had to buy a new shaft for the gearbox costing way over £100 and all due to a former owner's negligence. Deeper in the box the condition was certainly good, all the gears were intact, little sludge was present and a routine clean pulled it back to its former glory. As a principle we replaced the bearings in the gearbox along with the seals as these are available by size from spurious bearing suppliers at a fraction of the cost of genuine items.

The YZ85 has a six speed box and is as straight forward as they come, careful checking that thrust washers are in place on the outer shafts and all the circlips comfortably in position and we were ready to rebuild. Like many gearboxes, the YZ had to be slid into position as a cartridge because the forks will simply not ease past the outer engine casing with

the gearbox in place.

In the fleet we have no two gearboxes alike. The KTM has a four-speed box which is beautiful to look at with its aluminium selector drum with top hat bearings on the selector fork pegs. It is certainly a robust unit to handle the grunt of the open class machine. To our knowledge all four-stroke KTMs have the bearings on the selectors which are not just to make selection easier – they protect the softer aluminium selector drum too!

The KX-F is probably the most typical of all the bikes – a five-speed box that is easy to work on. Although I've repaired a few other KX250Fs over the years it is generally the heavy footed riders or those who stamp on the selector lever who have problems rounding the dogs and consequently twisting a selector fork. Our KX-F's gearbox is in great shape – I wish the same could be said about our last project the PS3...



# BRACE AGE!

HOW AND WHY DR CHRIS LEATT IS STILL TRYING TO SAVE OUR NECKS...

Words and photos by Adam Wheeler

A fair few years after the Leatt brace first forced riders to question another area of their safety the lively debate about neck protection is still alive. Are you a believer? DBR was able to go out to South Africa to be persuaded...

The Leatt neck brace has steadily become part of the off-road rider's silhouette since its tentative introduction to the international market in 2006. Now, seven years on, Leatt are still trying to spread awareness and change attitudes. It is a battle they are steadily winning with over half a million braces clasped over shoulders around the world but doubts remain.

The brace now comes in six guises and there are other variations for car racing and a freshly developed road racing STX RR. Whether a motocross world champion like Jeffrey Herlings, a Dakar winner (over 80 per cent of the 2012 field used neck protection and most were Leatt) or a plodding Snowmobile rider there is a Leatt configuration for all.

For most that have encountered the origins story then the tale of how Dr Chris Leatt was spurred to invent something to protect his son after

witnessing the death of his fellow amateur off-road racer Alan Selby in South Africa in 2001 is well known. Leatt decided to take a hiatus from medicine, moulded the first five versions of the brace himself using his father as a model, and the project began to really hit a stride when the likes of BMW and Heinz Kinigadner (Wings for Life) took an interest. The business went global in 2006 but it was an unconnected and passionate home video plea by David Bailey in '07 that caused the company's stock, both figuratively and literally, to rocket.

"When I saw the Selby accident and tried to deliver the technology that might have an answer I thought I can't be the only person wanting to do something about neck injuries," recounts the former trauma surgeon. "When my son started riding and Alan died I looked around and couldn't find anything on the market and it became clear that to try and develop something myself was a no-brainer. If I could solve the problem with a useable method – not some ridiculous item that wouldn't be wearable – then my reasoning was that other people would want one.

"I went hell-for-leather in trying to produce the technology that would work

and only later did it become apparent that there was a massive market – that it did answer questions and it would become a common sight on motocross and off-road riders. I really thought for a long time – after developing the brace – that I'd step out of medicine for a while and then head back into it but a decade later I haven't gone back."

The brace has been accepted by a section of the motorcycling community, particularly off-road, and has even been showcased in high profile incidents such as Trey Canard's at the Dodgers Stadium supercross last January and Steve Ramon's qualification fall at Lommel in the summer of 2011.

Their official website – [www.leatt.com](http://www.leatt.com) – has an accident submission form and testimonial area where people are able to give feedback and the crew in Durbanville are able to run simulated tests and sometimes even ask for the damaged helmet, x-rays and other material to enable further studies. "We are constantly looking for feedback," reveals General Manager Phil Davy. "Testimonies motivate us to continue to improve and I'd say we've had around 150 in the last six months."

Manufacturing of the brace is

>>











**MX2 world champion Jeffrey Herlings uses Leatt products**

outsourced to China and around 70,000 are sold a year – 45 per cent in the USA, five per cent in South Africa, 10 per cent in Japan and Australia and the difference in Europe and other territories. 20 per cent of all sales come through the bicycle market and eagle-eyed spectators of the BMX competition at the London Olympics last summer would have seen the brace prevalent on riders at the Olympic Park venue.

For all the good vibes there is still a degree of scepticism about the brace. Some grey areas – like claims it causes broken collarbones, is responsible for spinal fractures and is ultimately too restrictive to use when riding. These were dispelled in Cape Town but more on that later.

The indifference to neck protection comes from the old 'force of habit' and also a significant fact that official independent safety standard (a stamp similar to CE or DOT found on helmets) for neck protection still does not exist. It means that any brand or company can wax lyrical about the effectiveness of their product but it won't carry any sticker to prove it.

"When you are the sole voice talking about this specific product you end up looking a bit suspect sometimes. Now there are other people talking neck protection but it is still a single topic," says Davy. "We would be the biggest

beneficiary [from an established safety standard] we are desperate for it."

Leatt operate virtually without a veil. There is no secrecy and the results of their tests are easily accessible (via the website), as are the scientific 'white papers' that support their product and work. "I think there will be a new group of people who come onboard to beat the drum for us about neck protection and those people will be the safety standard companies. The SFI organisation is working on a standard right now – they call it 57.1 – but it is a very difficult subject because there are literally thousands of types of motorcycle crashes whereas there are basically just three when it comes to an automotive neck brace. We have given them all of our information and we have worked closely with them but we cannot force them along otherwise it loses the very nature of being independent.

"We are not anti-competition," adds Leatt. "It keeps up standards and improves protection – that is why we got into this but most people do not do the tests and don't know their own product. The results can be quite worrying."

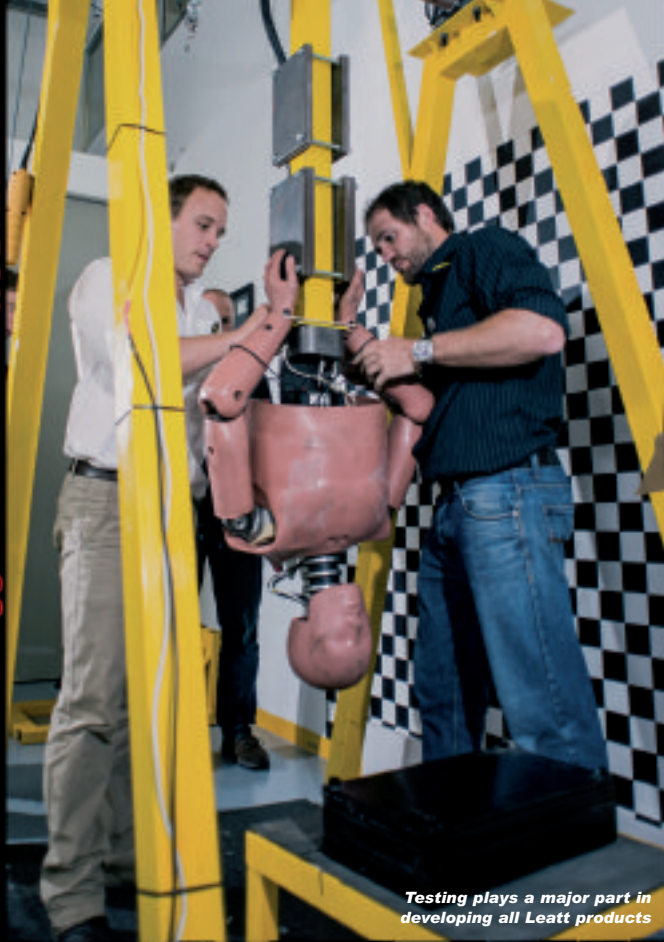
The small group of visitors to the Leatt HQ were shown evidence of tests and simulations where the GPX proved to be a safer and more effective product than rival units particularly

when it came to the crucial matters of hyperextension of the neck. This wasn't a boasting session though and one of the experiments actually showed the EVS brace to be more effective than the Leatt – "we test the competition to see if they got it right and if we can improve" – even though it ended up scoring poorly when it came to flexion.

But even if Leatt, Ortema, Atlas or Alpinestars stumble upon the ideal solution there is still the matter of convincing the public. In the past the brace might have been victim of false hope. There are some crashes that will break your neck and there is not much that can be done to stop something like a headplant into the ground causing a burst fracture. If you are going to crash and break your neck then it will happen and there is not much that can be done to stop a head-plant into the ground and a burst fracture.

Where the brace comes into play is through the milliseconds after impact and subsequent rotation of your head. It can mean the difference between a break or paralysis and even death. Neck protection does not offer a magic solution to crashes and as Leatt's Alternative Load Path theory and technology demonstrates, surging force from a fall onto your head is better placed somewhere around your body, like a trapezoid.





Testing plays a major part in developing all Leatt products



## TRIED AND TESTED!

### WHEELER'S WOAD TWIP...

A trip of around 160 miles around the Western Cape on a 1200 Super Tenere that included motorway blasts, mountain sweeps, fast gravel expanses and a dreamy coastal road was the best way to form an impression of a GPX brace. I didn't fall off the Yamaha – thank god – but there were a few hair-raising moments including a pedestrian Baboon family and a rear wheel bearing failure.

It took a while to get the brace set up around my shoulders and neck and I felt a slight push from the back strut for a short while. Needless to say when on the bike I only noticed I was wearing the brace when numerous strong gusts of wind tried to force both myself and the 'Super Ten' to the roadside dirt.

After a few fastenings it was easy to both clip and unclip the GPX and the weight was not an issue with it firmly planted on top of my raid jacket. The scenery was stunning around Capetown and there wasn't a moment when I was conscious of the brace limiting chances I had to take in the mountain landscapes and copious vineyards.

In fact the only hassle that I noted was at the end of the ride. Where do you put it? A helmet is easy enough to carry but the brace is another item for which you need to find a home. Lashing it to the outside of a rucksack would work.



Phil Davy knows the science behind what he's out there selling

muscles or shoulders that is less likely to be lethal.

"I think there is less scepticism now than there was at the beginning," opines Leatt. "There are people who are not convinced and are never likely to be and then there is the group that can be convinced. You just have to keep telling the story and highlighting the technology. What we do – compared to other companies – is that we publish everything. You can download our entire research document and the recipe for the brace from our website. It is all there. When someone tweets about something connected to the brace then it can be very easy to make a flippant comment but it is a lot more difficult to back up that statement with fact.

"I won't put the product on the market if I wouldn't on my own son and a philosophy like that makes you think long and hard about the safety ramifications," he continues. "The people that are working on this are passionate for it."

Perhaps it is only a matter of time – and word of mouth. Much in the same way that knee braces now seems an essential piece of kit. Although as Davy points out "people recover from knee injuries much easier than they do from those to the neck but people wear knee braces all the time.

"We can and need to reach a lot more people," the American continues. "I believe it was a recent RacerX survey where 43 per cent of the people did not use any kind of neck protection. Some of those with neck protection were using the foam race collars, which we explained in the laboratory do more harm than good. So we have room to grow and also get the message across about what protection is effective for you and what isn't.

"I believe we have more penetration in motocross than we do in enduro and other off-road. I think it was Honda – way back – that published a survey that said nine out of 10 of their off-road bikes sold never touched a motocross track. So there are a lot of riders out there that need the protection and we want to do something about that."

Apart from providing the strange and unsettling information that our spinal cord is in fact "the consistency of toothpaste in a plastic bag" the staff at Leatt wilfully dissected some of the myths and concerns about their neck brace through a comprehensive display of their laboratory tests.

First up was a look inside the prototype bay with mills, lathes and a spray booth and then onto the lab floor with Anvil test, a pendulum >>



Gert Krestinov has used Leatt products for years





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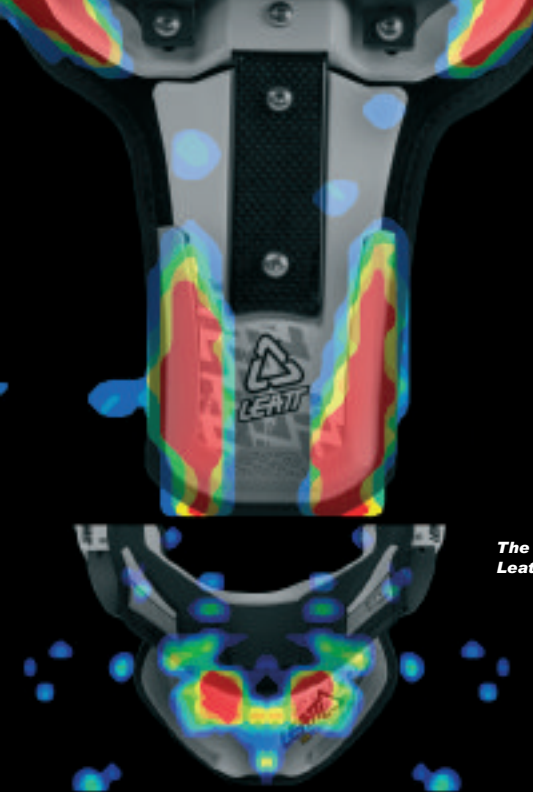
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**The red spots are where the Leatt distributes the load...**



swings and helmet drops. "Our testing goes in phases," says Leatt. "Sometimes it's every day of the week and it depends on what we want to run. The actual Leatt brace goes through three levels of tests as well as a third party so that's four levels before the unit reaches a packing box."

Dummies containing accelerometers and sensors that allow up to 23 channels of data swing gracefully into steel blocks, all filmed by a super slow motion camera and hooked up to computers with the valuable 'base line' for testing to allow accurate and reliable results.

The most disturbing sight is the vast pendulum rig that hooks to the roof and plummets down with the force akin to "driving a NASCAR into a wall at 200mph". External examinations are also carried out and a Tekscan to show the pressure points of the GPX brace (see the images on these pages) prove that force on the struts of the brace are not pushing on the vertebrae or the centre of the sternum.

"With linear acceleration – basically if you went into a wall and your head stops in one direction – it used to be thought that you could withstand 100 Gs over a very short space of time and it would be survivable," explains Leatt. "Then they showed that some NASCAR drivers were walking away from 140 G accidents. But a rotational injury, where your head hits something and starts to turn is a completely different thing. The brain is like jelly. If you spin it fast enough then you will sheer off its base. We call it a 'diffuse sectional injury' and it can be caused by a much lower impact force on the head but can cause death. Unfortunately there are so many variations of a motorcycle crash and some are not survivable. It seems far too easy to say the brace caused it when it is actually trying to prevent or reduce it."

The brace's concept of trying to lower rotational acceleration is based on the patented Alternative Load Path (ALP) – basically distributing the force that would snap your neck onto another part of the body. The cold truth is that a crash could well end up with broken bones elsewhere (at the very least heavy bruising) but this means the brace has done its job.

Internet forums are split on whether the rear strut of the Leatt brace is actually responsible for vertebrae fractures and paralysis – that the brace itself is doing more harm than good. It seems a little difficult to believe when Davy grabs a GPX and snaps the strut with his bare hands. "Typically the vast majority of paralysis



**Snap! The brace's back strut is designed to break in an accident**



centres around three vertebrae – T5, T6 and T7," reveals Biomedical engineer Cornell De Jongh. "People say the brace break thorax bones but we made our own tests. A crash can deliver as much force as 4000 neutrons – that's 400kg accelerated with gravity – yet we use just 30kg (300 neutrons) to break the back strut and every Leatt brace has that same fracture measurement.

"So much of the work is done on dummies then into a computer programme and simulation," he adds. "90 per cent of the job is done here and through setting up the test and working from the baseline. We created a thoracic spine model which took years of work.

"We want the back strut to break away at a controlled point," confirms Davy. "We have tested other brands and seen that other struts can take up to a second to break with heavier loads. Do other brands actually know what they are trying to do?"

Another misconception is that your collarbone will snap in the event of a fall through the helmet striking the brace. For those looking to lay blame Leatt has an interesting point. "If the brace were to break collarbones then it would be an inward fracture compared to the vast majority which are outwards. Collarbone injuries are fifty times more likely than a neck injury. If you have a big crash and the brace has a broken strut then there is a good chance it saved a neck injury. If you fall on

your left shoulder and you break your collarbone then on which side is the fracture? If it was due to the brace then it would be the right side simply because the crash would have forced the head to the right and the helmet would have pushed onto the brace and then the bone causing an inward fracture. If you have broken the left and it is outwards then it wasn't the brace."

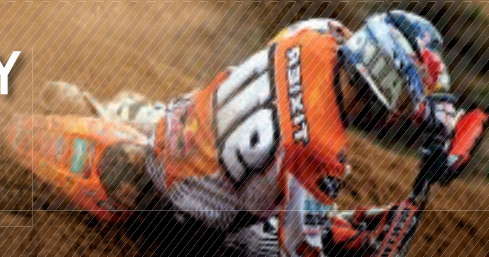
Leatt have spent years refining the shape and composition of the brace – it took 50 different models before finalisation of the new plastic strut – but it is clear that the combination of the materials that can weigh as little as 600 grams is a bone of contention. What might seem imperative and secure protection in the eyes of many can also be seen as cumbersome to others. To counter arguments of 'restriction' Leatt quickly cites the likes of Herlings, Wilson, Musquin and Despres who were able to win races and championships while using one of his company's products.

There is not much you can throw back at him although he admits that Leatt are now having to renew their tide of persuasion on an arguably bigger scale when their STX RR road racing brace – currently undergoing tests in MotoGP – will hope to entice those on the asphalt to consider protection.

"To put a foreign thing around their neck is a tough sell. The range of space between







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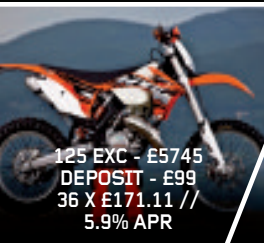


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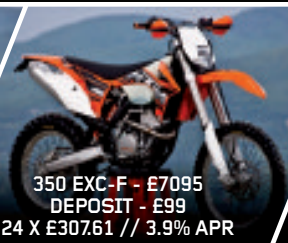
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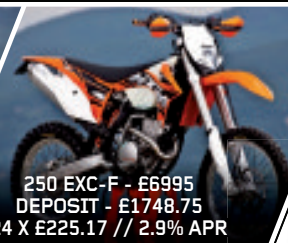
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the helmet and the brace needs to be safe and effective. There are many constraints on the design and you can put one version on 10 riders who say 'yes, it's okay I can ride with it' but then the 11th says 'no, it's useless' – then you have to go back to the drawing board.

I cannot even count how many alterations we made to that brace but I think we are very close now. One thing we have decided is that if you put a brace on a young rider – one who is 14 and grass tracking say – who is new to the sport then you won't have to re-convince him as he gets older. Try putting the same thing on a 50 year old and it is a completely different sell. He'll say "I can feel the brace" and you have to say "if you don't feel it then it is not going to work".

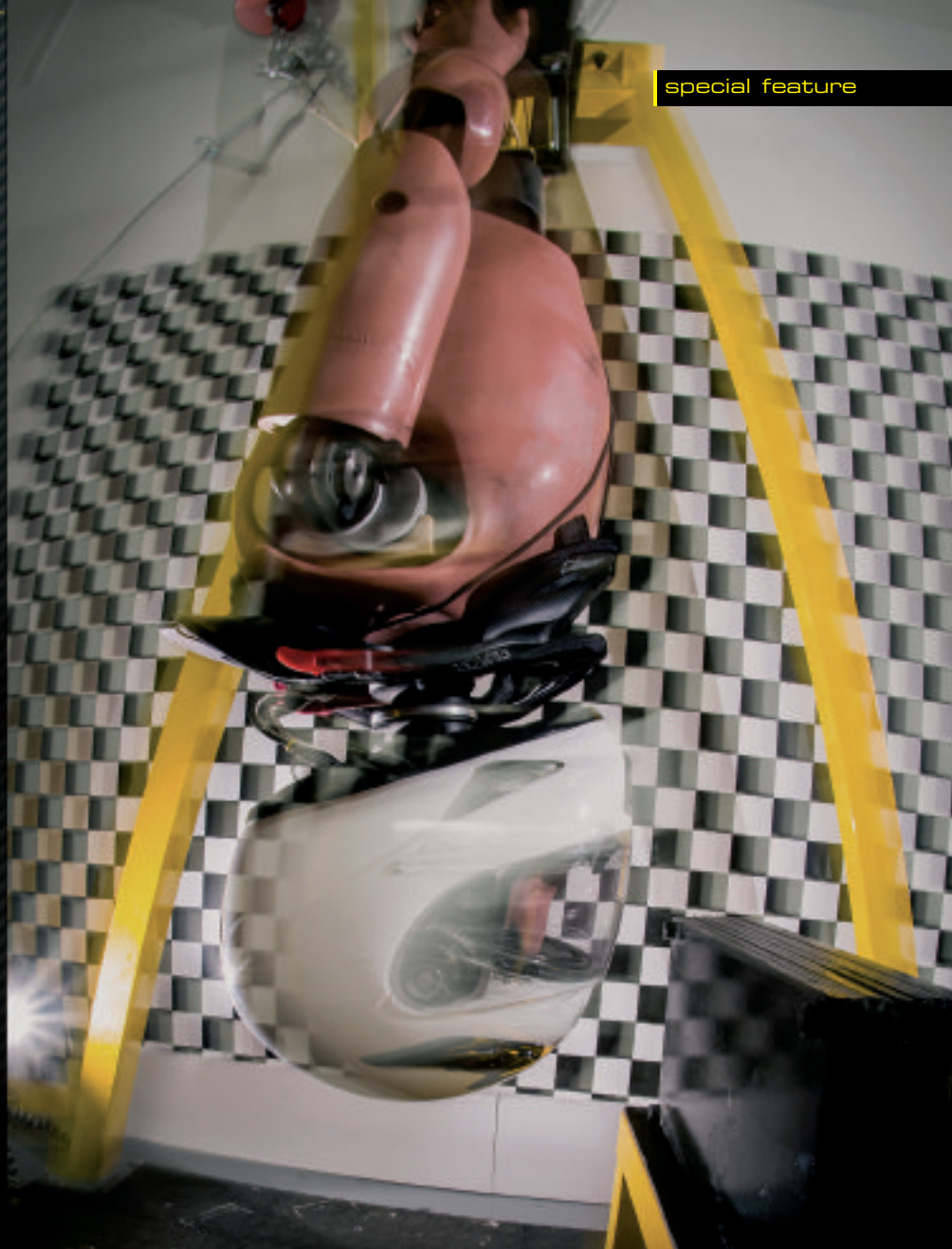
Davy, who has been with Leatt for three years and leads their effort in the United States was one of those riders and racers that ultimately cast a verdict. "I had to be convinced! Which was unusual because I had been in the protective equipment side of the business for so long either selling, developing, designing or marketing. I was an off-road racer but I'd never owned a neck brace. I was not a 'doubter' but I was not a 'believer' and I believe how I was three years ago is where the majority of the off-road riding public is now – somebody that needs to be convinced. What persuaded me was Dr Leatt and what he said about the work being done and done for the right reason and by the right people."

For a company like Leatt it seems there is a daily task of three priorities. The first is to continue to transmit their message about neck protection which they are managing through initiatives like their Straight Talk video series. The second is to explore the other possibilities for safety products that Leatt insists he wants to tackle. Fully compatible chest and back protectors being some of the obvious highlights.

"If I look at my own goals for what I want to do and the business then I still have some boxes to tick. There are some more products I want to see on the market," he comments. "There is a term 'Gold Standard' and in terms of technology it means the highest possible level and the goal is for us to be there for neck protection.

"There might be a concept out there that we haven't thought of yet that someone else may come up with in the future that might prove to be more effective than ours in injury prevention. Someone said to me once that when you are studying medicine for seven years then by the time you are finished 50 per cent of what you learned in your first year is wrong. That's a large percentage!

"And if you think of it like that then it's



possible that something we are doing now could change progressively in a period of time. At the moment we are saying we cannot prevent an actual loading injury but there might be something that can happen in the future. I feel what we are doing in neck protection with full face off-road motorcycle helmets has stabilised but there are other helmeted sports with high instances of neck injuries – like horse riding for example. I think you will see our technology expanding into other sports – as well as other products."

"When I first came to Leatt I had to ask a million questions and the first one was 'why don't more people wear this?'" adds Davy. "The three top answers provided by riders were – it doesn't fit with my chest protector, it doesn't fit with my enduro jacket and it doesn't fit with my hydration system. So those were the first three products we set out to create and they have sold quite well and we felt that broadened the potential market place."

The third priority extends to the protection of their product and how it can continue to be honed. Leatt recently won a patent case in Europe that will prevent any copycats and companies like Scott Sports, Fly and KTM are already licencing their own versions of Leatt technology.

"The legal component is always very draining," he laments. "It is negative energy and it doesn't lead to safer or better products. For sure it will mean we can focus more and

we don't have to spend huge amounts of money on lawsuits and can spend it elsewhere. Hopefully it will set a margin for us and we can say 'don't mess with that and leave us be to develop other products'."

Leatt claims the company already have at least two new versions of the brace in the pipeline. "I'm not talking about something that functions differently," he claims. "We have looked long and hard at the brace and we believe at this current time, with the current technology and with what we know, we cannot make it safer. However there is fitment, comfort, styling and compatibility with other apparel that we can work on."

The success of the Leatt brace and the feedback the company receives mean that Chris Leatt's determination and skill has made an alteration to the motorcycling landscape. In the grand scheme of two wheels it might only be a small feature but there is potential for major growth based on the proven effectiveness of the product and their dedication to more innovation. Leatt are on the long path.

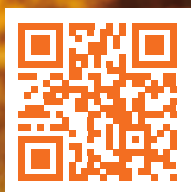
Davy has the last word. "We decided to let those against neck protection squawk. There is an ABATE organisation in the States that is anti-helmet law and they supposedly have all this information and proof that helmets kill people. I kinda put those people in the 'semi crazy' category. There is nothing to hate about neck protection. If you don't want to wear one that's okay but there is no reason to hate."



Cyril Despres is another champion who believes



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# BLIZZARD WARNING!

OAKLEAF KAWASAKI ARE HOPING  
TO SEE PLENTY OF SNOW IN 2013  
- PREFERABLY ON THE PODIUM...

Words and photos by Mark Turner





*Having raced Kawasakis for a few years now Snowy is super comfortable on the KX450F*

**A**lthough now only weeks away the 2013 race season can't come soon enough for Oakleaf Kawasaki's Alex Snow who's quietly confident that it will be his best year ever. "My plan is to hit the ground running and settle for nothing less than being on the podium week in, week out," says the six-footer from Tiverton who turns 25 at the end of March. They're definitely confident words, strong words even, but Snowy truly believes in himself because he feels he's ticked all the boxes necessary as he prepares for the long year ahead.

We hooked up with the 2005 Under-21 champ in the comforts of a well known restaurant chain to find out where this new found confidence has come from, who his new mentor is, how the race pace at GPs is quicker than you think and also that Alex thinks certain parts of the British motocross scene need a bloody good shake up...

**DBR:** You seem pretty pumped coming into the season. How have you been preparing differently to previous years?

**AS:** "I think I can put it down to two reasons really. Firstly it's my second year with Oakleaf Kawasaki [it's also Oakleaf's second year in the pro pits] and working with the same people and picking up where we left off last year is really going to help and then I've also been working with Josh Coppins over the winter..."

**DBR:** Josh Coppins? Tell us more...

**AS:** "Well I knew him anyway from when he was based in Marshfield then he came back over to the UK last summer and raced the Maxxis round at Milton Malsor. I felt that I needed that little bit extra in my racing and talked it through with Josh. I learned more from a 20 minute chat with Josh in the back of his truck than I had in a long time before and it helped no end. After Milton we hooked up a couple of times to go riding and training and I can honestly say that that was a turning point for me – from then on my riding and results started improving. He was also over for the last British round at Little Silver to help me out. I've spent a good part of the winter over at Josh's place in New Zealand preparing for this year's championships."

**DBR:** A lot of athletes rely on their trainers to train them mentally as well physically – is this also the case with you and Josh?

**AS:** "Not really no but to have someone like Josh in your corner automatically gives you a confidence boost and you're always going to trust in the things he's telling you 100 per cent. Obviously he's going to try and help me to get into the correct mindset but for me it's more important to work on riding skills."

**DBR:** Looking back to 2012 would 'consistent' be best word to describe your year?

**AS:** "Yeah that's a fair description. Up until the Red Bull Pro National at Hawkstone things were going good to be fair, we had a slow start to the season but we got our heads down and my race pace was improving but then I crashed and injured my shoulder at Hawkstone and that meant I missed the next Maxxis round at Langrish. Realistically that cost me fifth overall in the British championship. Prior to that I was happy with the way things were going – we were always around the sharp end of the motos."



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**Snowy leads British champ Kevin Strijbos at Little Silver**

**DBR:** You also took in the British GP at Matterley. How was that?

**AS:** "Your home grand prix is always a good one to do – it's pretty intense but a great experience none the less. I spoke with Josh about it and his advice was to try not to get caught up in the occasion and burn myself out on the Saturday which if you think about it would be easy to do. It was good for the team also – last year was their first in the British championships and just 12 months on they were in the GP paddock."

"As far as the races went both motos were really hard work. The race pace at the GPs throughout the whole field is a lot quicker than you think and it's true what they say about the races seeming to go in stages – they start fast, settle in mid-race and then there's a last push at the finish. It's a big jump to go from the shorter races we do here to the 35 minute plus two the GPs go but I got my head down and scored in both motos which I was pleased with. Those last two laps of that second race were probably the hardest and longest I've done in a long while."

**DBR:** Talking of GPs there are going to be more

world championship regulars in the Maxxis this year – does this make things more difficult for you and the rest of the British based riders?

**AS:** "I don't see it as making things more difficult. It's certainly going to keep us on our toes and make things a lot more interesting and possibly tougher. But from my point of view I think it helps bring you along as a rider. The Maxxis is going to be the strongest championship in Europe so if I can do well here among the current Grand Prix riders who knows where it could lead to in the future."

**DBR:** This is your second year with the Oakleaf Kawasaki set up – they seem to be a pretty cool team who seem to be putting a lot of effort into their racing.

**AS:** "Yeah they're a cool bunch of guys who are putting so much effort in – so much so that I think we are now being recognized as one of the major teams in the paddock. The progression and effort they've made despite the difficult times we're in should be applauded. We've definitely made a further step up in our preparations for this year so hopefully

I can reward them with a good run in the Maxxis and Red Bull championships."

**DBR:** Didn't you run your own team back in 2010?

**AS:** "I did! In a way I was kind of forced into it because I picked up an injury at the tail end of the season before and I wasn't in a position to show myself at the last couple of races – those last few races are important if you're looking for a deal. An existing deal had fallen through so it was a case of putting a package together myself through private sponsors or not going racing at all – luckily it worked out okay."

**DBR:** Would it be something you'd do again?

**AS:** "If I was forced to do so then yes I would but not through choice – it's just like being self employed where you end up having to organise everything and that's when it becomes difficult to focus solely on your riding and training. In an ideal world if a sponsor was to offer say £70,000 then I'd love to do it – until then I've just got to wait for my numbers to come up!"

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**DBR:** Looking forward to the 2013 season who do you see as being your main rivals?

**AS:** "With a whole host of new riders coming in and others swapping teams and machinery it's always going to be a bit of an unknown to start with. But for sure it's going to be the usual suspects – possibly the one's who have British championship experience like Karro and Simpson may have a slight advantage but you can't count out Leok or Barragan. From my point of view I have to be pushing for podium places every round which I know I'm more than capable of doing."

**DBR:** As an offshoot from racing you're now running your own training schools – tell us about those...

**AS:** "I've been doing them for a little while now and I really enjoy it. It's good to put a little something back into the sport especially at grassroots level – I even had a youngster recently turn up on a PW50 whose parents wanted him just to be taught how to ride a bike correctly. We also did a weekend school over in Dunkirk which was cool. It's important that the schools cater for all abilities but I've had a few schoolboys attend who are now beginning to show some promise in the youth championships so it's good to be involved with them. Plans are also in the pipeline for the guys at Oakleaf to set up some sort of academy which I will also be involved in."

**DBR:** How do you see the current state of British motocross and what you think the future holds for the sport?

**AS:** "I think it's suffering massively at the



moment mainly down to the current financial climate we're in but there are other things that need to be done to improve the situation. Something needs to be done with the tracks we visit for the big championships too – sure it would be cool to have loads of quality tracks at our disposal but that isn't the case so I think the tracks we do go to need to be changed around to freshen things up. Maybe get a track designer on board perhaps? Here's a perfect example – I've been racing around Lyng for maybe six or seven years now and I could tell you where every rut and braking bump will be by the second moto because it's exactly the same every year! God knows what guys like Swordy think who've been riding there for 16

years or more.

"Secondly I think some promoters are taking advantage of the good will of the riders and the people who run the teams – without us they would have nothing to promote! They need to put something back into the sport to help to bring in more outside sponsors – I think investment is the word! The situation has to improve and we have to work on promotion. To be fair they do a good job at the Red Bull Pro Nationals but generally at the moment the sport in this country is not drawing an audience. That's probably not helped by the TV coverage that really doesn't work in its current format – it's like watching paint dry! I don't even bother watching it and I'm on it."





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## SPOTLIGHT ON... **TAYLA SMITH #86**

DOB: 11/09/98 HOMETOWN: BARROW-IN-FURNESS, CUMBRIA MACHINERY: KTM 125SX AND 250SX-F

Cumbrian lad Tayla Smith first bleeped on the Rage talent spotter radar in a piece ironically titled 'Under the Radar' way back in February '09 in a feature about guys who for one reason or another take a less than straight forward route through the youth ranks. Most who choose the curved ball option usually pop back into line after a season or so – but for Tayla (on a SW85 at just nine years old) it will be this year before he hooks up again on anything like a level playing field.

Tayla's main problem – if you can call it a problem – has been his size and rapid growth. Amazingly five feet 10 tall and weighing 10.5 stone at just 12 years old and also in size 10 boots before he hit teenage years Tayla was already past the limits of what an 85cc machine could effectively haul. The solution then as it has been all through was to move up early, gain experience and patiently wait.

Tayla began racing the day after his sixth birthday. By the end of that first year racing a 50cc Auto he was regularly hitting top five results in Cumbrian events. Haverigg was always a favourite hunting ground and his Junior class exploits were very much in the same vein with top five finishes.

Always moving up early Tayla won the Vale MXC SW85cc title at just 11 before a brief stint on a BW85 followed in 2011. But still rapidly

shooting up by the middle of this season Tayla found himself learning the ropes on a 125 KTM under the guidance of Belgian trainer Henri Verstappen. The coaching went well and even though still only 12 Tayla loved being in with the big boys at YMSA and MCF events with MX90.

On his 13th birthday and following a stringent ability assessment by Ed Bradley an ACU licence to race the Youth Open class was granted. At the close of the article in 2009 I suggested Tayla Smith racing under the radar could be one hot property in years to come – fully breaking cover over the next couple of seasons Tayla will be aiming to prove just that.

**Rage:** How did the 2012 racing season go for you?

**TS:** "I had to recover from a big accident and kidney damage before I got the all clear to start racing again in March '12. I was still only 13 but managed to win the ACU North of England title and finished second in the Vale Rookies series. I was also a part of the Vale team that won the MCF club title so it turned out well."

**Rage:** Looking at 2013 how does it all go forward from here?

**TS:** "I'm hoping to pack in as much training as possible with visits in February to Belgium training camps with Henri Verstappen and Marc



### **TAYLA'S TOP... TRACKS**

"Hawkstone Park, Desertmartin, Valkenswaard and Preston Dock."

### **RIDER**

"Jake Nicholls."

### **SPORT**

"Karate!"

### **SCHOOL SUBJECT**

"Physical Education."

### **BUDDY**

"Everyone – we all hang out together."

de Reuver. I also keep fit with football, karate and basketball – I'm really sporty at school. As for competition I aim to major in the Red Bull Rookies and the Scottish Nationals."

**Rage:** Will 2013 signal the end of two-stroke racing for you?

**TS:** "No not at all. I love the smoker and plan to use it for practice and also racing the Scottish events. I can't afford to give any horsepower away in Red Bull Rookies so I will use the 250F."

**Rage:** Is there anyone you need to thank?

**TS:** "Oh yeah this really is important. Neil and Marie at D3 KTM in Kendal have been brilliant. So have Shuttly and Jeanette at ADT in Ulverston, Kate's Skates plus my other sponsors Cumbria Karting and not forgetting mum and dad of course. Dad's business is Empat Removals and he digs real deep for my racing – thanks to all."

**Rage:** And finally Tayla tell me something secret, unusual or just interesting about yourself...

**TS:** "I give all my bikes names. The 125s have girl's names all beginning with K and my 250s have boy's names again beginning with K."

**Rage:** Mmmkay...





## SPOTLIGHT ON... **JACK KELLY #311**

**DOB:** 10/02/95 **HOMETOWN:** WARRINGTON, CHESHIRE **SPONSORS:** MALIN CONCRETE FLOORS, MANCHESTER EXTREME, FULL TRAVEL SUSPENSION, SHIFT, FOX HELMETS, ROCK OIL, HINSON, MICHELIN, DANGER UK, FMF, SAYNT CLOTHING, WWR CALIFORNIA

**W**inning a shed load of 65cc titles in 2006 was a truly epic way for Jack Kelly to announce his arrival on the big stage. In February JK hits 18 and 2013 will be his swansong youth sortie. Chatting to Jack it's obvious he's determined to go out on a high and looking back he's definitely done some other interesting business too.

Finishing third in the 2003 World Mini's at 50cc level Jack underlined his blossoming talent the following season by taking a BYMX 65cc heat win at Foxhill aged just seven. The BYMX in '05 proved to be a career low point however with a horrible mid-season accident at Haverigg taking a hefty toll. As a result of the prang Jack's spleen had to be removed and ended the '05 campaign.

Back with a bang in '06 racing an unusual blue KTM and it was glory all the way nailing down the BYMX, BSMA and World Mini titles. On the back of this success an offer to ride Suzuki in Holland in '07 under the same awning with brother Tom, Jeffery Herlings and Tim Gajser shows just how highly rated JK was at this point.

In 2008 – the year Herlings won the Dutch ONK 85cc crown – Jack finished the championship fourth. But with his grandad in poor health an enforced return to the UK pushed racing on to the back burner for all of the 2009 term.

2010 offered a new lease of life when the Kellys hooked up with Nick Glackin of Malin Floors. In their first season together a joint third place finish in the BYMX 85s was a good start but 2011 was largely spoilt by glandular fever. Last year the racing fortunes turned once again and a runner-up result in the British Youth Nationals Open was the undoubted highlight.

**Rage:** Jack when you returned to UK racing for the 2010 season I often found myself penning Jack Kelly sand specialist. The assumption being that years spent on the continent battling in deep

sand had given you an edge – true or false?

**JK:** "The real truth is that I learned my sand skills very early on in my career riding at the now defunct Cheddleton track and at Brampton. I spent so much time at Brampton I felt like an adopted Cumbrian at times. Holland and Belgium obviously added knowledge but we did a good percentage of racing in the German ADAC series and that's all hardpack. Sand or hardpack, I just race it as it comes."

**Rage:** Taking a look back over your career there's been a few of changes in brand and a swapping between two and four-stroke power. Which has been your favourite machine?

**JK:** "My all-time favourite has to be the blue KTM – the Dutch bike I won the 2006 championships with. There was a lot of paddock chat that I was racing a big bore kit but when they stripped the engine at Leuchars they were all gob smacked to find it was actually only 60cc. It was made up to 65cc for the Ballykelly round later in the year because of the track in Ireland but as a 60 it was amazingly fast."

**Rage:** How come you were racing on a Dutch bike in '06 before you actually went to race in Holland in '07?

**JK:** "You have to go back to the winter of '05 and we – Tom and I – were at a Spanish training camp with Jan Postema. There we met up with Dutch tuner Rob Roolvink who I think has a business in Germany now. He offered us a deal to race his machines in '06 and it all just developed from there."

**Rage:** In the 2010 BYMX following your round three win on a two-stroke KTM why did you then switch to a 150F?

**JK:** "It all came about at a practise session with my KTM parked up out of action I rode a friend's Honda. It seemed like a good idea at the time – Hondas were pretty well dominating the series. Looking back though

it was a real mistake."

**Rage:** With Tom being a couple of years older than you has this been good for training?

**JK:** "I have to say Tom works and trains really hard and he's a great example to me. Along with Herlings who showed me how to switch lines effectively and Ken Roczen who I think just focuses the best Tom is my favourite rider. I'm closer now to Tom's back wheel than any other time in my racing though and hopefully if all goes well we'll be in the Maxxis paddock together in the near future as part of Nick Glackin's Malin KTM Racing Team."

**Rage:** Tell me more about Nick Glackin and Malin KTM...

**JK:** "Since we returned to racing nationals here in 2010 Nick has become a real good friend, mentor and team manager. We owe Nick big time, he backs us and brings in so much sponsorship it's unreal. I don't think we would be able to go racing so professionally without him onboard – thanks Nick! Malin KTM Racing is Nick's team and for 2013 it will be Tom, me and Paul Coffey under the awning."

**Rage:** What is the team Malin plan of attack for this winter and what does 2013 have in store?

**JK:** "Just lots of training and racing wherever I can over the winter. I've been hauling the 250 two-stroke the past couple of months and it pulls my arms out at times but the strength training should do me good. The Maxxis MX2 title has to be the number one aim with the British Youth Nationals and the ONK series in Holland being the other big championships."

**Rage:** One last thing – tell me something interesting, unusual or different about you...

**JK:** "We have a family motto – TAB – that stands for Throttle And Bottle. My favourite number is 311 (K311Y) and for 2013 it's back to racing a KTM aka Kelly's Time Machine!"



# SHERCO

## Motorcycles



300i

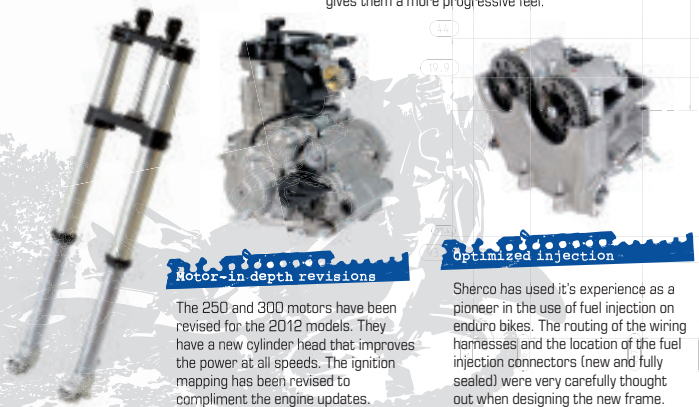
SEI 2012

WP fork

Brembo brakes

The 48 mm diameter fork that is fitted to the R series was developed by WP in conjunction with the Sherco factory. It provides outstanding control on large impacts while maintaining a great level of comfort on small bumps.

The renowned Brembo brand makes its appearance on the 2012 Sherco. This has led to an improvement in the feeling of the clutch and brake systems and provides gains in braking power and gives them a more progressive feel.



Motor-in depth revisions

The 250 and 300 motors have been revised for the 2012 models. They have a new cylinder head that improves the power at all speeds. The ignition mapping has been revised to complement the engine updates.

Optimized injection

Sherco has used its experience as a pioneer in the use of fuel injection on enduro bikes. The routing of the wiring harnesses and the location of the fuel injection connectors (new and fully sealed) were very carefully thought out when designing the new frame.

	250 i / iR	300 i / iR
Engine	4 stroke DOHC, 4 valve Sherco technology	4 stroke DOHC, 4 valve Sherco technology
Engine Size	250 cc	290.05 cc
Bore x Stroke	78 x 52,2 mm	84 x 52,25 mm
Fuel System	Magnetti Marelli digital electronic fuel injection	Magnetti Marelli digital electronic fuel injection
Cooling	Liquid system with forced circulation	Liquid system with forced circulation
Starting	Unique electric starting system	Unique electric starting system
Battery	12 V / 7Ah	12 V / 7Ah
Exhaust	Stainless steel header pipe, aluminium muffler with catalytic converter meets Euro 3 stds.	Stainless steel header pipe, aluminum muffler with catalytic converter meets Euro 3 stds.
Transmission	6 speed sequential gearbox, primary gear drive chain secondary drive	6 speed sequential gearbox, primary gear drive chain secondary drive
Clutch	Hydraulic, multidisc in oil bath	Hydraulic, multidisc in oil bath
Ignition	Ducati alternator 150 W	Ducati alternator 150 W
Chassis	Half perimeter frame Chrome-Molybdenum	Half perimeter frame Chrome-Molybdenum
Fuel Tank	8.5 Litre fuel tank	8.5 Litre fuel tank
Brakes	Hydraulically activated Brembo i: Ø 270 mm (front) Ø 220 mm (rear) iR: Ø 260 mm (front) Ø 220 mm (rear)	Hydraulically activated Brembo i: Ø 270 mm (front) Ø 220 mm (rear) iR: Ø 260 mm (front) Ø 220 mm (rear)
Front suspension	Ø48 mm tubes rebound and compression adjustable 300 mm of travel i: SACHS «OR» telescopic fork iR: WP telescopic fork	Ø48 mm tubes rebound and compression adjustable 300 mm of travel i: SACHS «OR» telescopic fork iR: WP telescopic fork
Rear suspension	WP progressive, multiajustable rear shock utilizing a linkage and rod system 320 mm of travel	WP progressive, multiajustable rear shock utilizing a linkage and rod system 320 mm of travel
Front wheel	Excel 1.60 x 21" aluminium rim, steel spokes and Michelin Enduro Competition tube type	Excel 1.60 x 21" aluminium rim, steel spokes and Michelin Enduro Competition tube type
Rear wheel	Excel 2.15 x 18" aluminium rim, steel spokes and Michelin Enduro Competition tube type	Excel 2.15 x 18" aluminium rim, steel spokes and Michelin Enduro Competition tube type
Weight	102 kg (225 lbs.)	102 kg (225 lbs.)
Wheelbase	1.480 mm (58.27 in)	1.480 mm (58.27 in)
Ground clearance	350 mm (13.78 in)	1.480 mm (58.27 in)
Seat height	870 mm (34.25 in)	870 mm (34.25 in)

£6750

£6850



Semi-perimeter frame

Sherco frames are famous for their excellent adaptation to the practice of enduro racing in all conditions. There is a big revolution in 2012, the enduro models are receiving a totally new, semi-perimeter frame made from chrome molybdenum. This new design was chosen after extensive testing in the enduro environment and proven to provide excellent performance in this discipline. The shape and thickness of the various frame components varies depending upon the constraints and loads applied to them. This results in

high lateral stiffness (for more precise handling, better control in the corners) without increasing the longitudinal stiffness (providing excellent comfort and a neutral feeling in all circumstances). This new configuration allows a clearer focus on the rest of the components, the swing arm, the exhaust and the fuel tank have been redesigned to enhance the total feeling of the bike. The 2012 Sherco becomes sharper and more accurate, while keeping the tracking and feel of the front end that has made its reputation.



SHERCO

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# THE 2012 DIRTIES!

MIKE GURNEY'S SUPER SIX!

**T**here are already the Oscars, Brit Awards and Mobos so not to miss out we have our very own bunch of gongs to dish out – the 2012 Rage Dirties.

With competitions galore it's not that easy to pick an overall rider of the year for 2012 but one rider does stick out – Conrad Mewse is the very best of the best for me. Superb exploits last term have massively raised expectations for 2013 and Conrad starts as one of the clear favourites to win both the Dutch ONK and EUM 85cc titles. Conrad's skills have also been acknowledged by KTM UK as they're backing Mewse with quite possibly the best package of support ever offered to a British youth racer.

Unluckiest rider of the year? No doubt about this one – it has to be young Christopher Mills. At one point Chris was looking bang on for a 65cc championship double. The first setback came with a mad mid-season date clash effectively halving his options. Finally and most cruelly of all with virtually both hands on the EYC title Chris suffered the heart break of an engine failure in his final race.

My unsung hero for 2012 is Josh Coleman. With the British Youth Nationals and BSMA BW trophies now sitting proudly on his mantelpiece he did win a championship double and it was a fantastic return for a hard working lad racing on a tight budget.

At the entry point of racing – 50cc Autos – a new kid on the block arrived. We featured him last month and Charlie Heyman wins the newcomer of the year award. In his very first year of national racing Charlie roasted, toasted and eventually bossed 'em all.

With Adam Sterry and Ben Watson scoring points as 15 year olds racing in the Maxxis plus the superb efforts of Nathan Watson and Liam Garland a separate award is born for best youth effort in the pro ranks. With a man size show all season long Adam Sterry wins it just edging out the slightly older Nathan Watson.

Youth Rider of the Year:

Unluckiest Rider:

Unsung Hero:

Newcomer of the Year:

Best Youth Performance

in the Pro ranks:

Best Championship:

**Conrad Mewse**

**Christopher Mills**

**Josh Coleman**

**Charlie Heyman**

**Adam Sterry**

**Red Bull EYC**



The EYC has been the race series of the year

## ALFIE!

AFTER A STEADY ROOKIE SEASON IN THE BIG-WHEELS MASTER MOUNTFORD'S LOOKING TO REALLY MAKE A MARK IN 2013...

**A**fter a solid if unspectacular debut season in the BW85cc class which saw him finish 13th despite missing a round Alfie Mountford is looking to step it up in 2013. We caught up with the 14-year-old Yorkshire terrier to find out a little bit more about what makes him tick.

**Rage:** The 2012 season was your first in the BW85cc class – how did you find the step-up from a small-wheeled machine, how did it differ and did you have to change your style to adapt?

**AM:** "Moving up into the big wheels is something that I have really enjoyed. I have got on with the big-wheeled machine a lot better than I did with the small wheel. I noticed an increase in pace and aggression in the big wheels but at first I struggled to adapt. However, banging bars with some of the older boys has made the year more challenging and enjoyable."

**Rage:** You ended the year 13th despite missing a round – did that live up to your pre-season expectations?

**AM:** "I did struggle with my suspension most of the year and was hoping for better results but on the whole I was pleased. I got off to a bad start but throughout the year I improved and I was pleased with the latter part. We moved suspension suppliers to FTR for the last round at Culham Park and I made an immediate improvement in my pace. I'm definitely looking to improve my results next season."

**Rage:** Why the no-show at Duns?

**AM:** "I went on holiday to Spain with my school. We had to book the holiday before the Red Bull Pro National dates were released and it happened to fall on the Duns event. I was a little sad when I found out but on the plus side the holiday was really good."

**Rage:** What was the highlight of the Red Bull Elite Youth Cup series for you and why does it stick out in your mind?

**AM:** "My highlight has to be the Hawkstone event. I really like the track there and I was pleased with my riding and results. Events 22

put on a really good show down at Hawkstone and I feel it's the most iconic event in the year."

**Rage:** What are you doing over the winter to prepare for the new season?

**AM:** "I have taken some time out over the past weeks as I have been recovering from a spinal operation. I have been back out on the bike a few times now and I'm getting back into it. I'm getting into my rhythm and I'm starting to feel stronger on the bike. Hopefully I will get out on the bike some more to improve before the start of the season. I'm also training at the gym to build up my fitness which will hopefully help me with my endurance through the races. I am training with Justin Morris MX as often as I can through the winter."

**Rage:** What are your aspirations for 2013 in the Red Bull Elite Youth Cup?

**AM:** "I'm hoping for a few podiums throughout the year and I would ideally like to finish top five overall. I'm just going to ride and have fun and hopefully come out with some pleasing results to show for my hard work."

**Rage:** What's your ultimate goal in motocross?

**AM:** "I'm just riding to have fun and enjoy myself. I really enjoy it when I'm out riding my bike. I don't know if I want to pursue a career in motocross yet but I'm going to try my hardest and come out with some good results."

**Rage:** How do you get on at school and what's your favourite lesson?

**AM:** "I do enjoy going to school and my favourite subject is probably geography or science. My school seems to be giving me a whole load of homework and I'm finding it difficult to fit everything in and with exams coming I have to work hard."

**Rage:** Is there anyone you'd like to thank?

**AM:** "I would like to thank my mum and dad for making the season happen and Justin Morris for training and advice. Also I would like to thank my local bike shop Transit Motorcycles and Motul Oils for hooking me up."

## GOT A STORY FOR RAGE?

THEN CONTACT OUR YOUTH EDITOR MIKE GURNEY AT MIKEGURNEY55@YAHOO.CO.UK





*Red Bull KTM*  
**KTM 450SX-F**  
*RIDER: RYAN DUNGEY #5*









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## COUNTDOWN!

The 2013 race season kicks off with a plethora of Stateside supercross action where the fantastic four – that's Ryan Villopoto, James Stewart, Chad Reed and Ryan Dungey – are set to wage war on each other. It's kicking off over here too as the Arenacross UK series speeds through London and Belfast – don't miss it!



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